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A Day in the Life of the SACS Superintendent

Dr. Phil Downs begins his first school year in position after Dr. Steve Yager's retirement

Ethan Zweig
Copy Editor

The role of the superintendent is not one easily ignored. This official is in charge of the entire district, from overseeing construction projects, to managing business, to representing the district as a whole.

"There is no average day. That's one of the things that is, for someone like me, fun about the job," Dr. Phil Downs, superintendent, said.

Downs took on the role as superintendent of SACS this year, taking over for his predecessor, Dr. Steve Yager. As Downs adjusts to life in charge, he deals with new responsibilities and expectations, including stepping out of his comfort zone.

"I have to represent the district in a way that makes it look like the professional, great organization that it is," Downs said. "If it was up to me, I would be like, 'Hey, I'm Phil,' but in public they need a man in a suit and tie who has a Ph.D. that shows I have the required experience in education, and I am actually qualified to lead a district this prestigious."

Downs is constantly working with administrators, faculty and students across the district to address problems as they arise. He keeps in constant contact with all of the schools in SACS, and is often stopping by to help in any way possible.

"(Downs) and I are constantly calling each other, texting and emailing a lot," Park Ginder, principal, said. "We have a pretty routine conversation; likewise, it's not unusual to not talk one day, nor is it unusual to talk multiple times per hour."

Most may think that, with the job, Downs is in charge of the entire district. This, however, is not necessarily the case.

"One of the misconceptions is that when you're superintendent, you get to be in charge of everything," Downs said. "What you quickly find out is that would be impossible to do, so that has to involve the superintendent not saying what it has to be, so there is some buy-in from people, and I can allow them to have a lot of say in how their school works."

With the new assistant superintendent, Lynn Simmers, adjusting to the district, Downs and Simmers as a unified team becomes more beneficial to the district. "She's really good at seeing the structures that underline a lot of the big ideas in education," Downs said.

"And I see myself as more of a guy who likes to play with the big ideas. So I think we make a very good team that way, and that's one of the things that I think I'm most excited about. We can leverage each other's strengths, and it'll be good for SACS."

Because Downs has to oversee almost every project happening within the district, emergency meetings can occur as early as 6:30 a.m., or as late as 9 p.m. These conversations can cover anything from board presentations, to working with teachers, to student needs, as well as the upcoming senior experience and ways to improve the school buildings. With all the work, it can be difficult to visit the schools in SACS.

"I like what (Downs) is doing for the district, but I wish I would see him in the halls more," Brandon Speakman (10) said.

Although the day can be filled with tir-

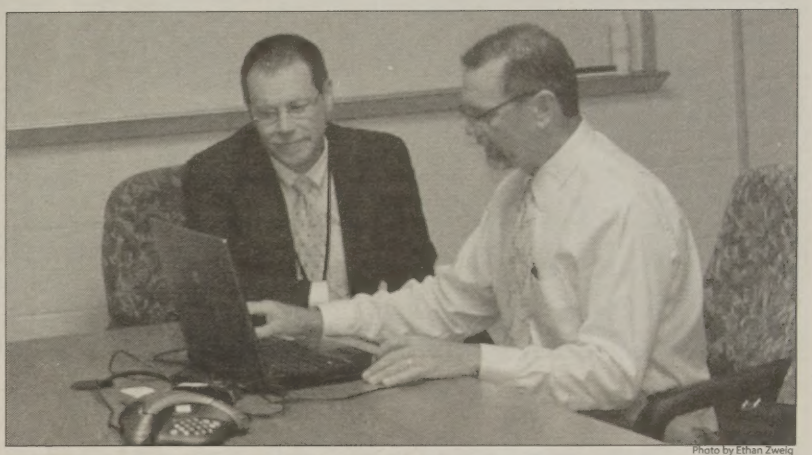

Photo by Ethan Zweig

Downs discusses plans for an upcoming business meeting with Steve Lake, assistant principal.

ing business meetings, surprises often tend to spring up for the superintendent.

"At least two or three times a week, something will come up that is so far outside the realm of anything I would've ever thought that I would have to think about," Downs said. "On construction projects, for when there's a maintenance issue in a building, the idea of knowing about construction techniques or how buildings are built is something that I think most people don't spend a lot of time thinking about."

The responsibility of being superintendent can be exceedingly stressful. Despite the pressure, there is still room for fun in his job.

"I'm learning a lot about things that I never thought I would need to know or would have a chance to know, such as technology and different activities throughout the district," Downs said. "I'm having the time of my life."

Football turf, entrance renovations completed

New concessions stand, running track among updates completed by football season

Aparna Chintapalli
News Writer

The start of the 2014-2015 school year has brought forth several changes to the physical environment in and outside of the school. The renovations concerning the football field are the most prominent changes. Not only is there a refined turf to drape the football stadium, but there is also a impressive football entrance, new concession stands, and an improved running track.

Jim Coplen, business manager, was involved with the specificities of the project, working alongside the architect firm Barton-Coe-Vilamaa.

"The design process involves several different steps and takes on several different iterations before it is finalized by a school board vote giving the administrators permission to advertise the specifications and ultimately gather bids on March 13," Coplen said.

Several people were involved with this long-term project including the central office administration, school administrators, athletic directors, affected coaches, as well as the band department directors. Several architects worked in line with the school officials to develop appropriate specifications, which were then presented to the school board for approval.

The school board and the district administrators had been in discussion about many different district projects for over a year; making renovations to the athletic fields was one of the top priorities. Financed through a bond sold in May, this project began in late April of this year. Though most of the renovation and construction changes have been implemented, there are still a few items left to complete before considering the project entirely done.

With many changes already made and others on their way, many of the athletes and athletic coaches have supplied great feedback.

"The renovations have really turned an already great facility into an even better (one)," Chad Zolman, football coach, said. "There were only positive comments from everyone involved in the process from what I have observed so far."

> **"The renovations have really turned an already great facility into an even better (one)."**
>
> *-Chad Zolman, football coach*

This prolonged project has been successful in both the eyes of the administrators as well as the student body.

"It gives a new look to the school," Courtney McGrew (12) said. "This improvement has definitely reached the expectations of our school, and I hope more projects like these will find their way into benefiting the students and everyone else affected in the district."

The renovations to the athletic fields have proved to be beneficial for athletes and students, as well as everyone else attending football games and using the area for different purposes. The project itself worked efficiently to the point where most of the renovations were completed over the course of a few months, and these changes have provided significant benefits.

"The entire stadium looks so much better with the simple renovations to the gate and concession stands," Gansemer said. "It has a cleaner, more modern appearance as opposed to the archaic looks of the old gate. It makes me feel like I am going to an event rather than sneaking through a back alley."

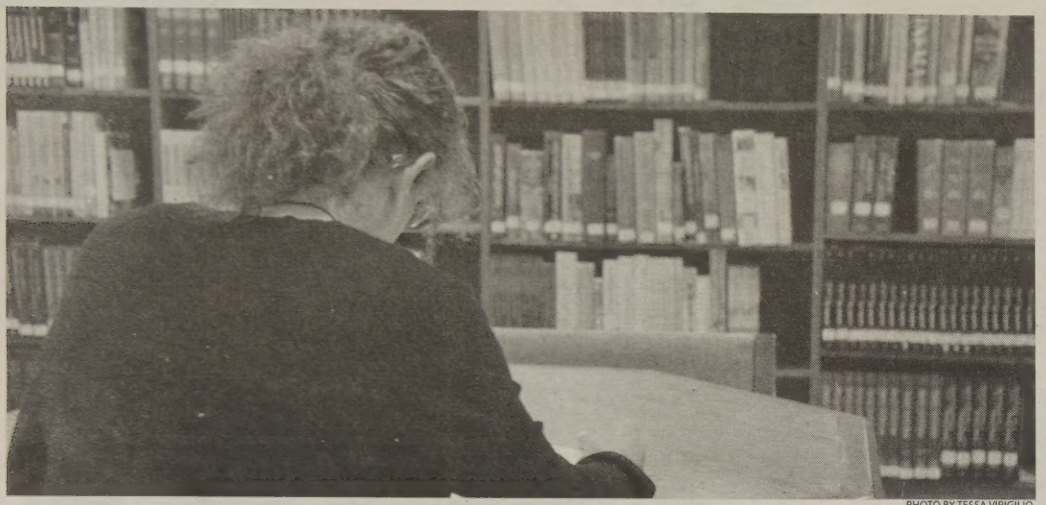

PHOTO BY TESSA VIRIGILIO

Kaley Gasvoda studies for her dual credit classes in the IMC's study area. She attends class twice a week for two class periods.

Seniors participate in block classes

Pilot program mirrors college life in Senior Experience

Tessa Virgilio
News Editor

For high school seniors around the nation, it has become a common belief that the fourth year of a structured academic bell schedule seems to drag on without purpose. After receiving most or all of their required credits and being accepted to colleges early in the year, many seniors pencil in filler classes out of obligation.

Administrators recognized this trend more than a year ago and began brainstorming the details of a program that would evolve to alter the course of the senior year.

"When Principal Rick Smith was here, we were sitting around and talking to some seniors about 'senioritis,' which kind of got the ball rolling," Steve Lake, assistant principal, said. "We started talking about it, and we thought there's got to be something we can do for these kids that's better than what's going on."

The Senior Experience, currently in early stages of development, is being piloted by Park Ginder, principal, and Lake. Its goal is to simulate the college atmosphere on a small scale, thus making the college transition less of a shock. It also serves to provide flexible scheduling and to treat the seniors more as the adults they soon will become.

"The senior year should be your best year," Lake said. "(...) We should be helping you with that transition from a seven period structured day to what's going to happen to you when your parent drops you off at the doorstep of Indiana University-Bloomington and says, 'See you at Thanksgiving.'"

Ginder and Lake spoke with graduated students last fall who provided feedback on their transition into college and what would have been beneficial to know before being immersed in the collegiate atmosphere.

Graduates mentioned the abundance of free time one has as a college freshman, Lake said. Through the Senior Experience block schedule, students have free time after blocks. They attend a block class for an hour and a half, the length of two traditional class periods, on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays, teachers are open for office hours.

"We're trying to offer something for kids to engage them in their senior year," Lake said.

Overall, participating seniors agree they have had a smooth encounter with the block scheduling.

"You go to your class two days a week, and you're in there for an hour and a half," Kaley Gasvoda (12) said. "You're able to do your normal stuff like any other class, but you're there for a longer period of time."

Teachers such as Sarah Imbody, English W131 teacher, find the extended class period extremely beneficial to their teaching of the curriculum.

"I think especially for a writing course, it works out well to have the students there for that 90 minute block," Imbody said. "It fits well for the writing process and what I do in that class."

The Senior Experience pilot program, presently consisting of four classes, is only the beginning of the growing selection. 125 out of the school's 570 seniors are in the offered classes: speech, English W131, psychology and government.

In the IMC, there is an area cleared out for participating seniors where they can study or hang out between or after blocks. The ultimate, larger vision is to create a student union-type room with wireless study stations, TV, coffee, snack bars and lounge areas.

The Senior Experience is an immense project that Lake believes will be continually refined. The program is attempting to instill the confidence in every type of student that they can make something out of attending a college.

"I think it's good for the seniors," Joe Wolter, speech teacher, said. "The seniors tend to get a little complacent when they get older(...) This will give them some opportunity to see what the college life is actually really like."

Homecoming week stimulates school spirit

Abby Clarke
News Writer

Homecoming week: a week of good times, fun costumes and of course the homecoming football game.

"I like (the spirit days), but I wish we had more creative ones like movie character day," Celeste Whalen (12) said. "I think they did easier ones to get more people involved though. Overall I think student government did a good job."

Monday was reserved for spirit wear; anything blue or gold in your closet qualified. Tuesday followed closely behind, advertising the beloved theme of Twin Day. Best friends who shared an identical sweater and goofy guys who shared banana hats actively participated in this double-up day. Following Twin Day was the pink-out, alluding to the wildly popular movie, "Mean Girls," and the popular phrase "on Wednesdays we wear pink." Thursday, the celebrity/movie character day, was a wave of fictional characters and familiar celebrity faces.

"Grease" day cinched the week, providing an opportunity to flaunt a vintage poodle skirt or to sport a rough leather jacket. The day encouraged students to throw themselves back to the 1950's by dressing up as one of their favorite "Grease" characters.

"The spirit days are great this week," Erin Carlstrom (12) said. "They are fun but easy enough to do with the clothes you already have in your closet."

Hyped for HoCo

Monday: Spirit Day
Tuesday: Twin Day
Wednesday: Pink Day
Thursday: Character Day
Friday: Grease Day

The traditional homecoming dance was replaced with a drive-in movie featuring the 1978 "Grease" film, a romantic comedy directed by Randal Kleiser.

Admittance to the drive-in was the typical process; one purchased a T-shirt designed by Christina Jesse (12), the senior class vice president. The T-shirt cost 15 dollars and served as the admit-one to the drive-in event. Students laid blankets in the grass of the football practice field. Matt Hamilton (12) created the idea of a homecoming drive-in movie.

"Student government went to Parkview Field late this past summer, and after throwing around several themes, we ended up deciding on a mock drive-in movie," Hamilton said. "(Student government) knew that we did not want to do a dance or repeat a tailgate, so we felt that a drive-in was a nice compromise."

As students rev up their engines and cruise on over to the school to view a beloved classic, homecoming week has been described by these students as nothing but cherishable. Homecoming week succeeded through artsy themes and group pictures to make innumerable memories that students will be able to recall the next time they view "Grease."

Changes in cafeteria food spark outrage among students

New United States Department of Agriculture health standards limit lunchtime options, offer "healthier" choices

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The cafeteria food is often a point of contention among students. While some praise Thursday's rolls and Tuesday's circle pizza, others are enraged by alterations made to last year's menu. The size of the entrees as well as altered ingredients particularly caught students attention at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year. The initiative to provide healthier lunches stems primarily from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s health standards, which were applied after the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 established there must be nutritional standards on school foods. The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has several campaigns corresponding to student nutrition, including the School Breakfast Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the National School Lunch Program.

State agencies are in charge of implementing these mandated programs. The purpose is twofold; USDA hopes to combat both hunger and obesity. The Smart Snacks in Schools initiative has altered the cafeteria's food selections the most drastically. By combating empty calories and eliminating certain choices, students are left with healthier options. The National Institute of Medicine suggested some of the enacted changes such as the restriction of foods without nutritional value. These standards also focus on reducing sodium and increasing whole grains.

The purpose of this program is valiant. Establishing healthy habits for children will benefit students in their adult lives, especially because obesity is a serious problem in the United States as two out of three adults were considered overweight or obese in 2009.

However, its effectiveness is debatable because students can access junk food at other places besides school.

A particularly heated issue with the redesigned cafeteria menu is the cut back from two cookies per package to one. While it makes sense to reduce the amount of sugar and junk food students eat, this method will likely fail. Instead of only eating one cookie, students will instead buy multiple packages. High school students are old enough to control their portion sizes, and if they decide they want more cookies, they will simply purchase more.

> **"High school students are old enough to control their portion sizes, and if they decide they want more cookies, they will simply purchase more."**

A concern similar to the cookie issue, the switch to whole wheat grains is met with contest from students. Ingredients in student favorites, such as circle pizza, noticeably changed. If the students no longer like the food, they will choose not to eat it. With options like french fries and chicken nuggets available, students are inclined to selecting higher-calorie options they enjoy as opposed to other foods they do not like. Eventually, this program will likely be very successful. It is possible to eat nutritious foods that are low-fat and low-calorie while making healthy choices. However, students now are accustomed to receiving heaping portions of frozen yogurt, two cookies and cartons of french fries.

Changes to student health habits must be made by the student to be effective. With health education and young generations growing up eating nutritious foods, students will respond better to healthy lunch options in the future.

Whenever there are changes with the cafeteria food, there is sure to be a reaction, despite the fact it is in place to benefit them. Focusing on health is a choice, and altering the foods served in the cafeteria can only go so far to encourage healthy lifestyles rather than dictate them.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Students themselves must be willing to change their dietary habits, rather than food options dictating what is and is not considered healthy.

Flex Days offer students opportunity to work from home

Alternative to teacher in-service days will improve both student and teacher productivity

BY ETHAN YDE
Copy Editor

Change is sure to come with any new school year, a phenomenon especially applicable with the recent innovations in the technology department. This year, the school was awarded the opportunity to have Flex Days by the Indiana Department of Education. These days will serve as school days during which students work on assignments at home, while the teachers collaborate at school. With the structural reorganization of MyBigCampus pages, as well as the experience gained last year on eLearning days, Flex Days are guaranteed to be smooth-sailing for students and a learning opportunity for the faculty.

It is evident that any student would be thrilled to hear that he or she is able to sleep in, stay in pajamas and work on school for only a few hours at home; however last school year, the eLearning snow days were a controversial topic, with some students angry that they were not able to relax for a single day, and others satisfied due to the fact that eLearning days stop encroachment on summer vacation. Furthermore, many students were uncertain about assignment locations, as well as the superfluous amount of time needed to complete each task; however, due to the experience and readiness each teacher has accumulated since, eLearning days are sure to be an easier experience for everyone.

While students will have the ability to work in the comfort of their home, teachers will still have to arrive at school at the regular scheduled time. Teachers will attend technology training sessions to better their understanding of the tools of a digitalized world. After lunch, from noon to 2:40 p.m., teachers will be available on MyBigCampus to answer questions or help students access assignments. Instead of having two full day in-services, the staff has four half day conferences this semester. Although they will require planning and computer work, Flex Days will make the day less stressful and more productive for teachers as long as there are no technological difficulties..

In order to diminish the problem of students deciding not to turn in the work assigned to them from an eLearning day, the administration has issued strict punishment. Teachers are to report all students who did not complete their assignments, and these students will then be forced to attend school during the next Flex Day. The benefits of doing the homework and continuing the privilege of Flex Days definitely outweighs alternatives.

Another issue brought up during the eLearning days last year was that of assignment completion time. There were few complaints from students when the assignments took 20 minutes or less, but if an assignment took 50 minutes, many students were outraged. The teachers were told to give out 45-minute assignments, and as they attempt to do so, some work ended up taking far less or far more than prescribed. Because most of the students and faculty have already conquered eLearning days in the past, they are sure to implement the feedback from their students to assuage some of the stress that students were put under.

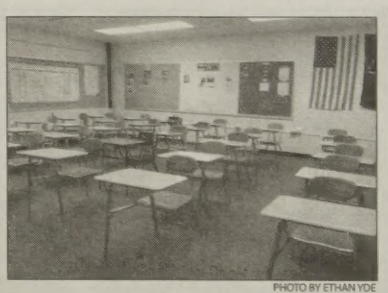


PHOTO BY ETHAN YDE

Classrooms will be empty on Flex Days. While most students will complete class assignments at home, the students who are at school will work in the IMC.

The Flex Day idea is certain to be a rather laid-back experience for students. Working in the stress-free environment of a quiet home will be much preferred to that of the monotonous and controlling school environment. With eLearning, teachers are able to experience the traditional in-service days, and students are able to work at their own pace with the assistance of teachers through MyBigCampus, email and phone. The promising program will bring positive responses from both the students and the staff.

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

NARI RO (12)

"Have you ever lost something that you wish you had now?" "My little brother, he moved and he lives in Wyoming with my dad. I miss having him around and his constant happiness. My house seems empty without him."

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

BERE CLARKE (12)

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

"Number one traffic cop in the U.S.A.--nationally known."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

ANNE BEDWELL (11), LEFT, AND ANDREA HOLLLOWAY (11) RIGHT

Anne: "Andrea is just super nice to everyone
Andrea: "(Anne) always laughs at all my jokes even when they're not funny."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

JAKE HERSHA (10)

"Most embarrassing middle school memory?"

"Almost setting the school on fire."

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

EMILY EIFERT (12)

"What's your biggest goal in life?"

"To be happy."

HUMANS OF

The student body here encompasses more than 2,300 backgrounds, personalities and interests. This photo es project, showcases the diversity of our students, a factor student. This display of people shows the varied types o

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

ALLIE GALLEMEYER (12)

"Greatest school memory?" "Prom (2014), I was able to spend time with friends at school that I don't normally hang out with outside of school. I was able to meet new people and get to know the friends I have now better."

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

MORGAN WILLIAMS (12)

"What is your biggest goal in life?"

"To be successful."

"Why do you think achieving this goal is so important to you?""So I can live a good, comfortable life when I'm older."

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

JENNIFER MARTIN (10)

"Band has taught me time management and I have met a lot of great friends."

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

BERNADETTE HARGIS (10)

"I'm in band and choir, and my favorite part of that is all the opportunity out there, the good music program here and

"all the people in it."

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

Tori Hall (12)

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" "I want to pursue sports medicine. I realized that I won't be able to be an athlete forever, but I still want to be a part of the sports community and help other athletes with their injuries."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Madi Jernegan (10)

"What's the most important thing your mother has taught you?"

"Always do what's right and know your boundaries."

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

Olivia Ormsby (10)

"My parents have always shown me what is right and what is wrong and to always learn from my actions."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Sarah Zurawski (11)

"What do you want to be when you're older?" "Missionary."

"There would be no pay, but there would be spiritual pay."

HOMESTEAD

0 students of all ages, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, ssay, inspired by Brandon Stanton's Humans of New York which contributes to the success and individuality of each of individuals who walk the halls of this school every day.

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

Stephen Regan (12)

"If you could give your freshman self any piece of advice, what would it be?"

"Trash the jorts, snip the hair, crush the glasses."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Ryan Nader (12)

"(I want to) get through law school, find a job that will support a family of a couple of people. "How will you complete this goal?" "Go to IU, complete my undergrad and switch to Notre Dame."

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

James Anunda (9)

"I want to go to London and Australia."

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Connor Kirk (12)

"What has been the happiest day of your life so far?" "The Fourth of July 2011 "because it was the last holiday I spent with my grandma before she passed."

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

Evan Smith (12)

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" "A soldier." "What challenges do you think you'll face when accomplishing this?" "Physical challenges as well as mental and emotional obstacles." "What made you want to become this?" "9/11."

Freshman transition imposes struggles all students experience

To put it plainly, freshman year is hard. It is perhaps one of the biggest transitions a person makes in life aside from maybe moving out of his or her parents' house. On top of that, freshmen are so used to being at the top that it takes some time to get used to being at the bottom. Of course, we've all been there.

Despite the implications that upperclassmen want nothing to do with the freshman class each year, we can all relate to the deer-in-headlights we see in the halls that let us know freshmen are among us.

Of course, one of the most noticeable differences between high school and middle school is the work load. Many freshmen begin right away to take honors or AP classes. Junior year is the most important to colleges, so you should prepare for junior year by starting good habits during freshman year.

If you get lost in the first few weeks of school, it's no big deal. If you find yourself in a part of the school that is not familiar to you, take a deep breath, find the closest office and ask for directions and maybe a pass back to class. The size of the building is obviously intimidating, so being late to class is going to be a concern. It's still a concern for me and many other seniors who have to travel across the school.

JESS SAYIN'
Life Editor

Aside from the maze of halls, the lunchroom is one of the scariest places for a freshman to be. If you ever find yourself in a position where you have no one to sit with, just find a group and ask them. If you feel like you're too shy for that, the IMC is always open during lunch for students to eat and study in.

I know it's pretty far into the school year at this point, but like I said before, high school takes a while to get used to. Despite a long transition time , high school flies by quickly. Do everything now while you still have four years ahead of you.

Despite a long transition time, high school flies by quickly, so take the time to enjoy it and make the most of your experience. Go to sports games and dances, get good grades and study because, when you're a senior and you realize you have no time left for any of that, you will look back with regret. Do everything now while you still have all four years ahead of you.

High school is obviously a scary thing to be thrown into after experiencing all the comforts of middle school for three years. It's a change for everyone. You will make more friends. Your teachers will begin to grow on you. Before you know it, the entire thing will be over. You will be fine.

on the new kids BLOCK

Latest additions to student body adjust to environment, different school to call home

BY AWBREI VACHON
Life Writer

The school has been undergoing changes lately, and students have been complaining left and right about the struggles of adjusting and compensating for what these changes have taken away. There are many students, however, who are going through much bigger changes.

They have to move to a completely new environment and start all over.

Moving schools requires an adaption to a new student body and an adoption of all the new social norms a new student body entails. This year, the school has opened its doors to accommodate an even larger number of transferring students than in years prior, with approximately 119 new students registered within the first month of school.

> **"The nice thing about Homestead being so large and having so many selections is there is kind of a niche for everybody."**
> *-Lindsay Lackland, guidance counselor*

"It's harder to get to know people in a bigger school," Jacob Hoger (12) said. "I'm just used to having all these friends at Norwell and people saying 'hi' in the hallways, and then here, since it's so large, I feel like I'm just a different face."

Jacob, along with his twin brother George (12) and younger sister Rachel (9), lived in Yoder until this school year. They spent their childhood in an old farm house, with maple trees and pine trees planted in the yard, but due to some complications with a sewer issue, the Hoger family decided it was imperative to move. The move required them to transfer from Norwell to Homestead, bringing stark differences with it.

"At Norwell, it was tighter knit," Rachel said. "It was more of a family than a school." Norwell is a smaller school, so according to the Hogers, it is easier and quicker to get to know everybody.

According to the Hogers, another difference between Norwell and Homestead is freedom.

"I feel like there isn't as much freedom here compared to Norwell," Jacob said. "The teachers would let you leave without passes, (and) I could listen to music in my classes. At Homestead, it seems like everyone is really strict."

As a plus side to moving schools though, Jacob Hoger said he has noticed tougher academics, as well as an improvement in the lunches. He admitted the academics are a little more difficult, but there are more options to choose from, as well as a plethora of clubs and extracurricular courses to get involved in.

Although, moving schools is difficult, moving states is a whole other ball game. "Moving to a new place is definitely hard because you don't know where anything is and you don't really know anyone," Creyana Robb (12) said.

Creyana and her younger brother Tyler (9) had to move from their home in Missouri when their dad transferred to a job here.

"I had to say goodbye to a lot of friends," Creyana said. "But with today's technology, it's not hard to stay in touch, so I don't miss them too bad."

Creyana had to take into consideration whether or not she wanted to stay in Missouri with her mom to finish her senior year at home while her mom tries to sell the house, or move with her brother and father to Fort Wayne to a new high school.

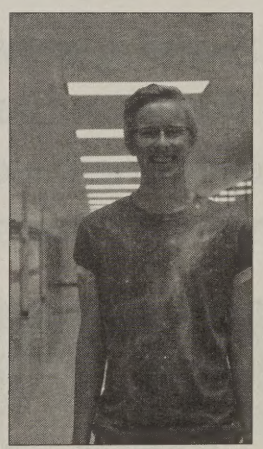
"I don't like talking to people and I don't like new things too much," Creyana said. "(But) I figured that I'd tried to challenge myself and make the leap to try a new school."

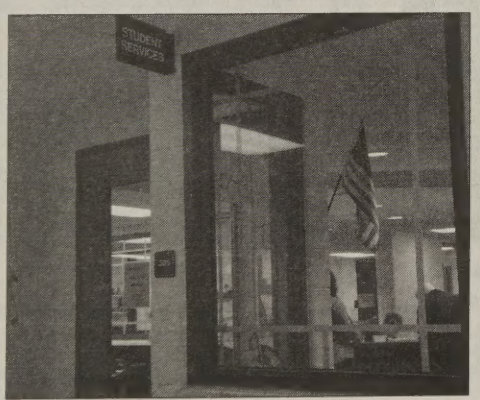
For both the Robb family and the Hoger family, adjusting is happening slowly but surely, and the same goes for other new students transferring. These students are invited to participate in a new student group once a week to get to know more people and talk about concerns they might have.

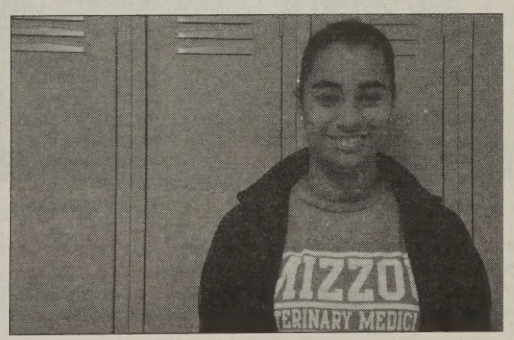
Lindsay Lackland, guidance counselor, in addition to the rest of the counselors, makes it her duty to help these students with their transfers, both socially and academically.

"The nice thing about Homestead being so large and having so many selections is there's kind of a niche for everybody," Lackland said. "It just depends on how willing they are to get involved."

PHOTOS BY AWBREI VACHON







Far Left: Rachel Hoger (9) adjusts to her first year of high school in a new district. Left: Jacob Hoger (12) notes the new opportunities with which the change of schools has provided him. Bottom left: Student services offers resources for new students in the process of adjusting. Below: Creyonna Robb (12) transitions to a new population of students while keeping in contact with old friend in Missouri.

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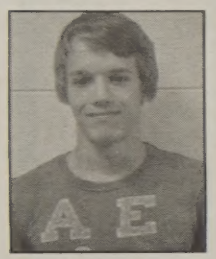
Unrealistic sport expectations deceive athletes

With fall sports fully underway in this new school year, coaches across the athletic department have been preparing their athletes to face new challenges and to improve upon their past performances. Motivation is crucial in getting athletes through the grind of the midseason and ready for the postseason, but there comes a point where this motivation may have become simply unrealistic.

A common example is the often repeated mantra of a team going on a "state run." The ultimate pinnacle to high school sports, it makes sense that a coach pines to achieve a state ring in their respective sport. Being on top of the state reflects well on both the program and the school, making this a mutual goal for all sports teams.



'KOWSKI'S CORNER
Sports Editor

But what if a team is simply incapable of achieving this goal? Rankings of high school teams periodically come out that are selected by that sport's coaches, and if a team is ranked lower, a state championship may seem, unfortunately, not in the cards.

However, do not get me wrong; it is good for teams to have a lofty and difficult goal to achieve from their hard work in the season, but there comes a point where these expectations become impractical.

Keep in mind that this overbearing attitude does not just pertain to school sports; club sports, too, have these same lofty outlooks, if not stronger. One of my club soccer coaches was notorious in his motivating talks: our team could win the league, win a tournament... the list went on. My coach believed that we could achieve something big; something that, in all honesty, was beyond us.

Unfortunately, and rather unsurprisingly, our team did not achieve any of these expectations. Our coach did not have a perspective rooted in sense, and finally realized his mistakes once the season was done.

A coach can instead take a realistic approach: crafting goals for individuals and the team as a whole so that every player comes out at the end of the season with something accomplished and not be disheartened by an unrealistically-fuelled expectation not being reached.

Sports should be fun, not a challenging job. Not everything is about being the supreme team in the state or nation. Idealistic expectations can be damaging, and require a new outlook. Work towards success—your own, realistic victory.

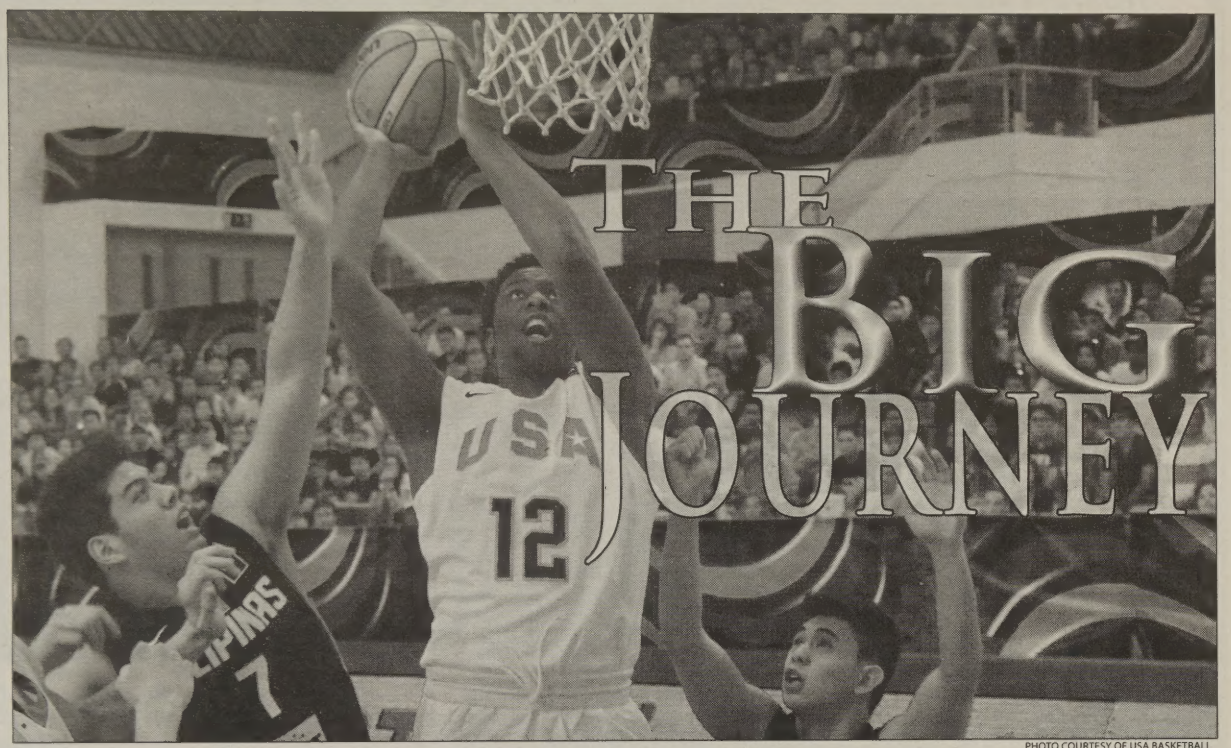


PHOTO COURTESY OF USA BASKETBALL

Caleb Swanigan (12) shoots for a basket in Dubai, rising above his opponents from countiries like Australia in the FIBA World Cup tournament.

THE BIG JOURNEY

Senior returns from Dubai after participating in FIBA World Cup

KYLIE POLING
Opinion Editor

Most students' summers were spent hanging out by a pool or binging on Netflix; one student, though, spent his summer in a slightly different way. Caleb Swanigan (12) traveled over 7,200 miles to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates this summer, the first time he had ever been outside of the United States, according to his USA Basketball athlete profile. Even more illustrious was the purpose for his transcontinental excursion: the International Basketball Federation's (FIBA) World Cup.

Selection to play on this 12-man team under-17 team was highly intensive and extremely competitive.

From 36 players, to 17, then down to 12, Swanigan survived all cuts the team made at tryouts in Colorado Springs over a three-week period. Once the final roster was selected, Swanigan joined head coach Don Showalter of Iowa City High School on his quest to win the 2014 Cup.

"I expected it to be good competition," Swanigan said, "but the guys we played against were better than I thought once we got farther into the tournament. I just expected, of course, for us to win, but it was a lot tougher than that."

After starting preliminary play against Greece on Aug. 8, Team USA proceeded all the way to the championship against Australia. In the final game of the entire tournament, Team USA pulled through with a final score of 99-92, a close game against the Aussie teens.

Swanigan's play as a forward, despite his usual center position, helped drive the team to its inevitable success.

"Caleb is one of those guys who doesn't get a lot of credit for what he does," Showalter said in an interview published on usab.com.

Swanigan's determination on and off the court showed throughout the entire tournament.

Fellow USA teammate Tyus Battle commended Swanigan's ability to make "really big" plays and keep his game "strong down low," according to usab.com.

In the end, all of these skills and a tremendous amount of teamwork culminated into a quantifiable success for Team USA.

"It felt great finally to win and just accomplish the mission, get everything done, after practicing and being (in Dubai) for so long," Swanigan said. "It all paid off in the end, and (we) didn't come in second cause (we) won the (tournament), so it made it all worth it."

According to Swanigan, playing on the national team was completely different than high school play.

"It's the best out of every country as far as players, so I don't have to play a lot, no one does, so you just have to play together," Swanigan said. "It's really intense and it's up and down; they have a shot clock, so it's a lot different than (high school play)."

Now that the FIBA World Cup tournament is completed for the U17 teams, Swanigan is back in the US and hard at work training for the high school basketball season.

"I work out in the morning, when I get done with school I work out, and then I lift, and I'll go to yoga, and then I'll do my cardio and that's pretty much the day."

With so much time spent focusing on basketball, though, it is easy to imagine how the sport can overtake a player's life.

"You get sick of it," Swanigan said. "You just have to keep working out and take the reward from all that."

Moving forward, Swanigan is optimistic about the upcoming season.

"It's been a good thing with Nike (Elite) and a good thing with the Team USA and winning," Swanigan said. "Hopefully that transfers into Homestead and we (continue winning)."

New varsity tennis coach introduces team attitudes

MALLORY MCCAULEY
Online Editor

A new season, a new coach. The boys varsity tennis team received an addition to the team this 2014 season: the new coach Kerry Mumma. This Canterbury transfer was formerly an assistant coach at the school but is now taking on the role as the Homestead team's head coach.

"It was a challenge going from private school to a public school," Mumma said. "Going from being an assistant coach to being a head coach (was hard because there are) different obligations (to being a head coach) that I wasn't aware of."

Mumma was originally presented the head coaching position years back, but due to poor timing, he declined. Former coach of 32 years, Jim Clark, had offered Mumma the position of head coach when Clark was "about ready to be done coaching," Mumma said. Now, he has taken over the position from Jim Shull.

Now with the "perfect timing," according to Mumma, the team has gained a new coach, and with that, a new set of experiences.

"(Coach) has (the team) thinking more about the team overall and cheering on our teammates, even if we are losing," Jeff Reinking (10) said. "He also brought in a new attitude and has us believing that we can win matches even if we aren't playing the best."

Along with new attitudes from the players has come praise from the coach himself about his team.

"The kids (are my favorite part of coaching so far)," Mumma said. "It's really a great group of kids, (and) they've really bought in to my style of coaching."

It seems as though Mumma has brought along both a new start and a new positive outlook to the team.

"I think that we have done really well (this season) compared to past seasons," Will Milne (9) said. "He has had some new ideas to bring to the team that have really helped us to (play) better."

With Mumma as the new head coach, the team has climbed its way to place 14 in the state, the highest it's been in about four years, according to Mumma. Despite this achievement, the team has still faced losses in its matches, and even injuries.

"(The team) has had some injuries," Mumma said. "(However, the injured plays are) finally getting healthy, and overall, the season has been successful, but there is certainly room to improve."

As for the season to come, Mumma has seen some "baby steps" being made towards the team he wishes to see, but nevertheless, he still sees room to grow and evolve.

"Tennis is on the rebound and moving in the right direction," Mumma said. "I would love to get back to how it was years ago when (Canterbury) would play Homestead and there was this aura around the program. That is missing right now, and my job has been to get that back."

As motivation and inspiration to get that "aura" back, Mumma called alumni back to speak with the team.

"One thing I did at the beginning of the year was (have) a handful of alumni come to talk to (the current players) to share what it was like when (those alumni) played (for Homestead)." Mumma said.

"(Getting the team back to where it was will take) word of mouth, (to help with this,) some of the tennis players would (need to) invite friends to matches and get behind us," Mumma said. "We have to be successful first, then the following will come later. We got some neat kids, and some kids that would be fun to cheer for and follow and get behind."

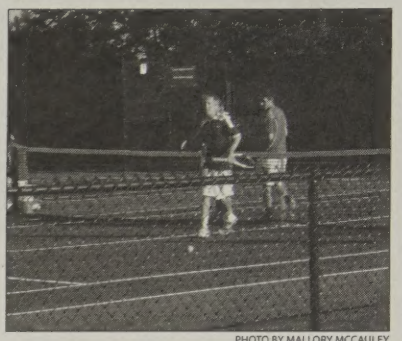


PHOTO BY MALLORY MCCAULEY

Kerry Mumma, new varsity tennis uses "aura" to maintain team inspiration.

Well-known senior walks relocate

Senior walk names moved to signs on fences from old location

COLBY SHOUP
Multimedia Manager

High school sports exist in a world chocked full of age old traditions and strictly followed superstitions, which is why many student athletes were shocked when they saw the famous senior walks on the entrances to the tennis courts and football field had been moved.

The purpose of the walks- to commemorate senior athletes who are participating in fall sports-remains intact. The only thing that has changed is that the names of seniors in fall sports are now put on signs on the fences adjacent to where they were painted on the asphalt in previous seasons. Currently, only the names of seniors participating in football are being displayed on the new senior walk, but Jeff Kintz, assistant principal, says signs for seniors participating in the other fall sports teams will eventually be on display as well.

"I think the change has worked out well so far, at least as far as football is concerned." Kintz said. "The names of the seniors are a lot easier to see now, which I would like a lot better if I were a student athlete right now. People don't really look where they're stepping too much, but they definitely look at the fences as they walk into games and meets." Kintz and his colleagues have even gone on to say that the change in the senior walk's location has been a positive change for school sports.

The walks being moved is a recent development as, until recently, many student athletes thought the walks were gone for good. One of these worried students was James Trevino (12), a defensive end for the football team who had heard multiple rumors of the walk's elimination and feared the worst.

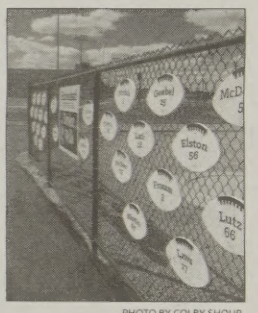


PHOTO BY COLBY SHOUP

The senior walk is located on the stadium fence.

"I was told that the administration was planning on taking everything down, but a group of football parents fought for keeping the tradition alive," Trevino said. "I found out later that the parent part was just a rumor, but still, I'm glad that they decided to move the walk instead of ending the tradition for good."

The idea of parents rallying for the walk's return was one of many rumors floating around the school sports scene. There were various other rumors about why the walks were moved to the fences, but rumors were primarily focused on why the old Senior Walks were being removed in the first place. Joe Updegrove, athletic director, oversaw renovations including the removal of the old senior walks, and was eager to set the record straight.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA D'VIRGILIO

Have Talent Will Travel

Student siblings finish five year global journey with Cirque du Soleil, settle in permanent Indiana home

PHOTO BY ALLIE NELSON

BY ALLIE NELSON
Executive Editor

Normal life was a kaleidoscope of colossal cities for Sophie D'Virgilio (11), whose memories consist of vibrant performances and new cultures. For the past five years, D'Virgilio and her family have been on an international tour, traveling the world with Cirque du Soleil. They have lived across the Atlantic in Amsterdam, settled in the upper east side of Manhattan, and appeared in cities including but not limited to Boston, San Francisco and Miami.

Now, the D'Virgilios have decided to settle permanently in a quiet, agriculturally suburban region of Fort Wayne with 26 different cities to call former homes.

Nick D'Virgilio, Sophie's father, was a drummer in the orchestra for the show. Originally taking the job due to the benefits offered for his family, D'Virgilio was driven by his passion for performance to make his bold choice.

"I got the job basically," Nick said. "I was looking for work, and luckily I was offered this job because work was slow at this particular point and it took a few months to commit, but ultimately the reason I said yes was because we could all go together."

In order for their new lifestyle to function, Sophie and her brother Anthony D'Virgilio (9) attended schools at the entertainment sites. Their constant moves affected the curriculum, as in each city, teachers would relate lessons to landmarks and opportunities specific to the current city.

"When we were in Amsterdam, we went to Anne Frank's house."

For these educational slash bucket list experiences, Tiffany D'Virgilio is grateful.

"You can't just give that to your kids," Tiffany said. "But (travel) made us able to."

Sophie and Anthony's backgrounds, different from those of most students, naturally caused their increased independence and maturity.

"The traveling was great because I grew up really fast (…) I feel like I learned a lot on tour and I've learned life skills," Sophia said. "You learn how to get around giant cities and you learn how to communicate."

After five years of nonstop movement, their time with Cirque du Soleil had run its course.

"We had a big final production called Kids Rule at the end," Sophie said. "Cirque du Soleil cut all of the family amenities so that meant school and housing, so as a remembrance of that we did one big show on the (same) stage (as the performers)."

Months of rehearsal prepared the performers with the skills necessary to display their dedication in front of all the cast and their families. The production, which was on the stage in Vancouver, was run by the directors and full crew of Cirque du Soleil and presented with the same light and sound systems. The final celebration dedicated a night to the travel and entertainment which had stood center stage in the lives of the D'Virgilios for so long.

Despite the benefits of living on tour, the challenges this lifestyle imposed make Sophie and her family appreciate living in one home.

"Packing (was the hardest part)," Sophie said. "Living out of, like, two suitcases got old. You kind of realize that wasn't real life. I mean it was real. You just can't live like that forever. There are people on tour that did that for 15, 20 years and it's crazy because moving around that much, never having something to call you own. You get used to it and it becomes a routine, but it's difficult."

Despite the struggles, the rewards of living according to the schedule of Cirque du Soleil offered rewards that made the disadvantages endurable.

"It helped us in a number of different ways, from saving money to getting closer as a family," Nick said. "But it was time for a change."

The transition to Fort Wayne had been surprisingly smooth for the D'Virgilios. Their move reveals their appreciation of change, even if the change is different than moving cities

"We're really used to changing environments," Sophia said. "Homestead's been really nice. Everyone I met has been really welcoming and really nice, and I'm loving all of my teachers, and I think the education is higher than I expected, so it's really great. It's turning out to be a good life experience."

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA D'VIRGILIO

1. Sophia D'Virgilio (11) holds her costume from the children's production. The show was presented at the end of the Vancouver tour. 2. Sophia performs stunts with silks. On tour, she also learned trapeze. 3. Anthony performs using fiddle sticks. To prepare for the celebratory event, the siblings learned from professional acrobats.

The Spartana

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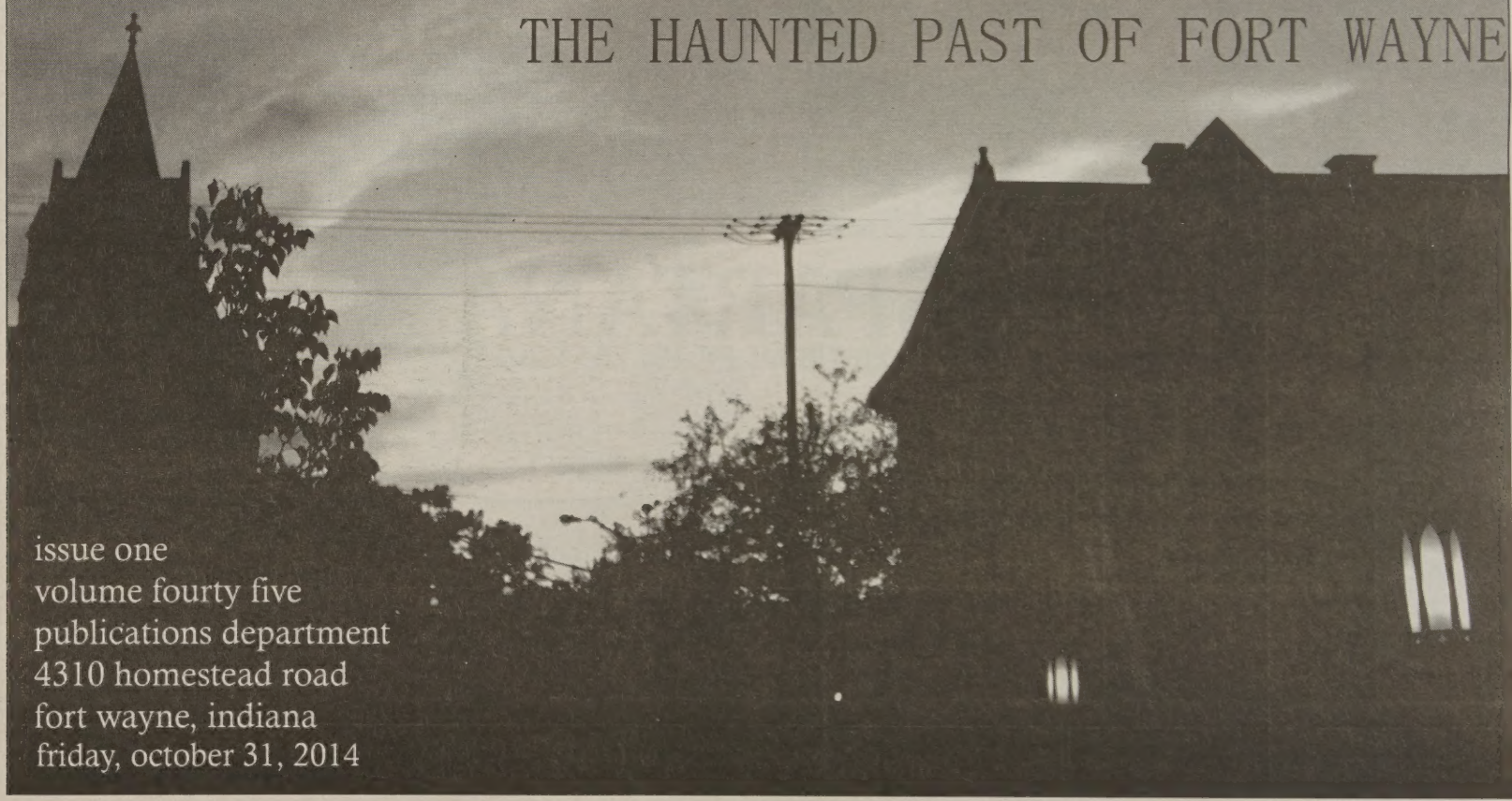
INSIDE WEST CENTRAL: EXPOSING THE HAUNTED PAST OF FORT WAYNE



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Those that could cause a substantial and material disruption to the school day will not be printed. Letters can be e-mailed to The Spartana at thespartana@gmail.com

School Board Forum connects candidates to voters

By Katie Dunlap
Editor-in-Chief

All four candidates for the Southwest Allen County School Board participated in a school board candidate forum. The candidates include Doug Copley and Tom Rhoades from District 1 and Jen Couch and Holly Glick from District 2.

Staff members from the Spartana moderated the forum held on Oct. 14. Four staff members posed one question each to the candidates. Each candidate was allowed three minutes to respond uncontested by his or her opponent. After all four questions were addressed, the candidates had two minutes to deliver final statements.

Topics included characteristics that qualify the individuals to be on the school board, policies they plan to implement, technology and the 2016 referendum.

Below are questionnaires each candidate completed. Responses include basic biographical information as well as in-depth responses to questions regarding district policies. For more information on the candidates, a video recording of the forum is available on both the district and Spartana websites. The Spartana hopes voters can use the questionnaires to make an informed decision on Nov. 4. The Spartana does not endorse any candidate.

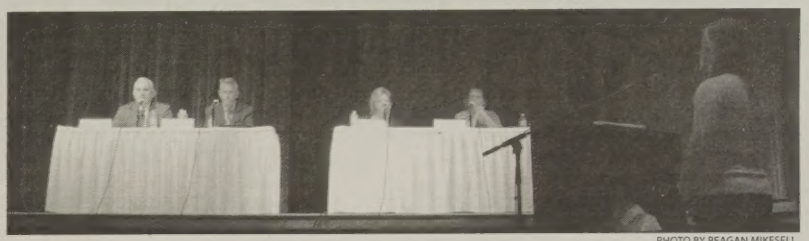


PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Awbrei Vachon, Spartana staffer, poses a question on district technology to the candidates.

District 1

Doug Copley

Education: BS Marketing, Indiana University
Occupation: Building Envelope Consultant with RPMTremco, I work with School Superintendents and School Boards in Indiana, 10+ years of senior level, executive management leadership experience (President, Vice President and Director)
Family that has graduated from or currently attends SACS: Chris Copley-age 27, HHS & IU, Ryan Copley-24, HHS & IU, Wife of 31 years (Missy) has been a Special Needs Assistant at Woodside for the past 14 years
Spartana: Why are you running for a position on the school board?
Copley:(Passion/Experience/Leadership/Vision) I am very passionate about student development and SACS. In fact, when we moved to Fort Wayne in 1995, from southern California, we selected Aboite Township due to the awesome reputation of SACS. I have 10+ years of executive management and leadership experience and work with many school Superintendents and school corporations in Indiana. This experience helps me understand the issues, challenges and opportunities facing SACS and I will make decisions based on what's best for all of the 7,050 students, teachers and taxpayers in the district. I take great pride in child development and am proud to have been a past President of the Homestead Athletic Boosters, Past President of the Don Ayres Time Corners Little League and a volunteer assistant coach for HHS Baseball. I will add value to the board by being able to help fix the funding formula and budget deficiency issues through partnership and collaboration.
Spartana: What are your goals for the district if elected to the school board?
Copley: Fiscal prudence. SACS is the 2nd lowest funded school corporation in Indiana and we need manage the budget transparently and efficiently. Knowing that we have significant budget constraints, I have a vision to collaborate with corporate America to raise private dollars in order to offset the budget shortfall and reduce taxpayer burden. (For example, "Lutheran Field" or "SDI Performing Arts Center"). Provide an Associate Degree at HHS to as many kids as possible. This is a game changer as an associates degree could save parents almost $40,000 in college costs! Provide the absolute best technology. This would include classroom and security (safety) technology as we need to keep our kids safe at all times. Reduce the brain drain by partnering with local companies (Swiss-Re hires 25 actuaries each year). Pass the referendum and save 51.5 teacher jobs. Fix the funding formula.
Spartana: What can the district do to further the integration of technology into the curriculum?
Copley: SACS needs to continue to push the envelope with technology. We need to enable our kids to compete on a global basis by providing state of the art resources and champion "out of the box" thinking. This would include on-line class options, 1:1 learning and e-learning. All of SACS K-2 kids have iPads and all 3-12 students have lap tops. How cool is that? Likewise, if a child wants to study mandarin, or a class that's not available at HHS, we need to find him/her an online class if it is not offered at SACS. Technology is definitely the wave of the future. Thus, I have a vision to partner with local technology companies to create "interns" or "coop" programs that would allow a HHS student to work with a web designer or app developer. Why wait until college and or after graduation for this "internship" collaboration to begin?

Tom Rhoades

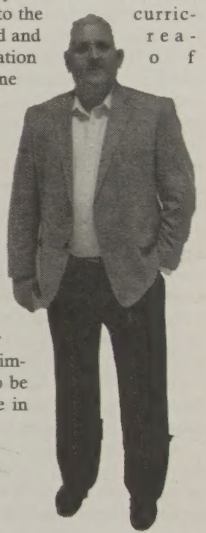
Education: BS Social Studies Education, MSM Organizational Leadership
Occupation: Chief of Police/Director of Public Safety for Parkview Health
Family that has graduated from or currently attends SACS: My son, Evan graduated in 2011. Andrew is a senior at HHS.
Spartana: Why are you running for a position on the school board?
Rhoades: Serving on the local school board is a great responsibility. The school board is involved with decisions that guide and direct the educational process for our district. The decisions made have a direct impact on each and every student who attends our schools. But the decisions also impact teachers, staff, parents, and those residents who have no children in the district. Because of the broad reaching impact of the decisions made on a school board level, collaboration and communication with teachers, parents, and tax payers is vital.

My experiences in security, education, leadership, & budget management, will help guide this district through the challenging times. Openness, transparency, integrity, and honesty must be our core values. Only with a strong foundation of public trust, built on these core values, can we truly achieve excellence.

Together, we can create a learning environment worthy of our rich history at SACS.
Spartana: What are your goals for the district if elected to the school board?
Rhoades: My first goal, if elected, would be to meet with teachers, administrators, and parents, to better understand their desires and expectations for our district. Open communication is critical to any organization. All stakeholders must have a voice. Their voice must not only be heard, but valued.

Secondly, we need to work together to develop a strategic plan for our district. A clearly defined Mission & Vision, set and established by representatives of all the stakeholders, will guide the decisions we make as a board from hiring, promoting, and allocating dollars spent. Part of our district strategy must be growing leaders from within. We hire the best and the brightest educators. It makes sense that we should be looking internally for our future leaders. Our goal must be to always recruit, hire, and promote the best candidates. We must include our staff and parents in the hiring and promotional processes.
Spartana: What can the district do to further the integration of technology into the curriculum?
Rhoades: Technology is certainly an important part of the 21st century. The advancement of technology into the curriculum must be tempered and reasonable. Any integration of technology must be done in collaboration with teachers and parents.

As we move forward with new technologies, we must ensure that the technology advances the foundations of reading, writing, and arithmetic. While writing papers on a computer is important, it is still important for students to be able to read and write in cursive. We must continue to educate the basics as the foundation for every student.



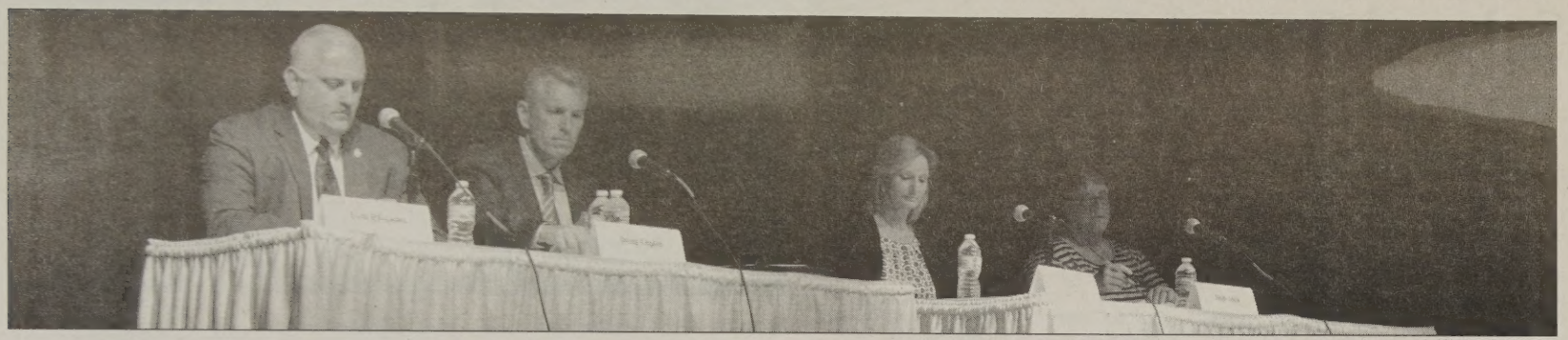


PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

District 1 candidates Tom Rhoades and Doug Copley and District 2 candidates Jen Couch and Holly Glick prepare to speak about their plans for the district. Elections will be held on Nov. 4.

District 2

Jen Couch

Education: Graduate of South Side High School
Occupation: Store Manager, Accounts Payable Manager and Inventory Specialist of Nexus Industries d/b/a Darlington Holiday Warehouse
Family that has graduated from or currently attends SACS: I have a son that is a Homestead High School graduate and three daughters that attend Homestead High School, Summit Middle and Lafayette Meadows Elementary.
Spartana: Why are you running for a position on the school board?
Couch: I feel that school board members should be approachable and open to input from the community and parents. I will listen, research, ask questions and make informed decisions about issues that come before the Board. With a new superintendent taking the helm this summer, there are many opportunities for new initiatives. I will bring a fresh perspective and enthusiasm to the SACS Board. I will work hard to ensure that SACS is a place where all opinions are welcomed and valued. I firmly believe that when a school district excels, the whole community benefits. School board service has become increasingly demanding, requiring creative thinking and a commitment to problem solving. I will be a school board member who is open-minded, optimistic and not driven by preconceived notions.
Spartana: What are your goals for the district if elected to the school board?
Couch: Fiscal Responsibility: The board is tasked with ensuring educational opportunities for our students while spending taxpayer dollars in a conscientious way. I will always ask these questions: "Is this what's best for the education of the students?" "Are we being responsible with the financial resources given to us by the community?"

Communication and Transparency: I propose the board meetings be videotaped and posted on the district website. I would like to see more opportunities for public input prior to decision making. When there's change in leadership at the district or building levels, the community, parents and teachers should have a voice in the search and hiring process.

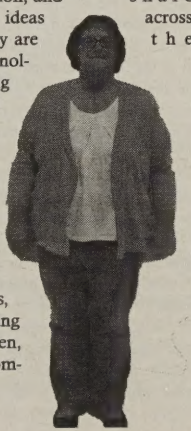
Teacher Support: The board should strive to provide teachers with resources and training they need to do their jobs. SACS has the best teachers in the state! I want them to have what they need to create relevant, meaningful instruction for every student.
Spartana: What can the district do to further the integration of technology into the curriculum?
Couch: District and building leaders need to be kept abreast of the technology before benefits can be integrated within a curriculum. The adults that instruct our children need to be given support and professional learning regarding technology and its capabilities before the students will see the full benefits of this integration.

The goal of going digital was to enhance the learning experience. Digital doesn't mean just putting a worksheet online. A digital curriculum is not really the issue. Teachers are to teach content curriculum and enhance it with the means of digital resources. E-Learning is a perfect example, yes, it's different, but by approaching it with an open mind and optimistic attitude, adopting this cutting edge technology will have benefits for everyone. It's important that the teachers receive the support that they need in order to create relevant, meaningful digital resources. Good instruction is the most important thing, even regarding technology.

Holly Glick

Education: Graduated from North Side High School Ft Wayne, IN 1974 and Ivy Tech Community College in 1994
Occupation: I am a nurse with ResCare Northern Indiana Auburn Operation. This is a company that provides services for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities that live out in the community.
Family that has graduated from or currently attends SACS: Emmanuel (Manley) Valedictorian for class of 99, Matthew graduated in 2000, and Stephanie in 04.
Spartana: Why are you running for a position on the school board?
Glick: I have been on the Southwest Allen County School Board for 20 years. I have seen our district grow over the years from barely no technology to lap tops in the secondary schools that students take to class and home. I have been involved with the hiring of three superintendents, the building of 5 different buildings, several renovations in 4 buildings, redistricting (several times), and both referendums. I have enjoyed working for our students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders. There are so many new and interesting things happening for our students now and in the future that I would love to take part in. I feel my years of experience will be an asset to the board and community.
Spartana: What are your goals for the district if elected to the school board?
Glick: I would like to see SACS advance in technology by continuing to use it as a tool. SACS will be collaborating with area colleges allowing our students to earn college credits and degrees. I would like to continue to work on getting our stakeholders involved with our schools and school board. I would like for our stakeholders to see the school board in action and know that we are working for them. I want them to see our transparency and what a great job our business manager does with our tax dollars.

I believe the referendum needs to be approved at least one more time. Our state government has talked about changes for the dollars per student but that could be several years in the making. We have worked very hard on our debt schedule and by 2019 we should have most of our debt paid off leaving us with just an upkeep of building expense.
Spartana: What can the district do to further the integration of technology into the curriculum?
Glick: The best way to further any curriculum is by relying on your teachers. They are your best source of information. The technology you see in our classrooms now were their ideas, and days if not weeks of research done by our teachers, who brought it to their principles, and then the school board. We have extraordinary teachers and administrators that are continually looking for new, inventive ways to use technology. They research things on their own time, meet with each other during collaboration, and share their thoughts and ideas across the district. They are the reason we have the technology tools we have, along with a school board that allows them to bring these ideas to us. The school board is made up of business owners, bankers, nurses, lawyers, moms, your next door neighbor. Were not educators, were just people wanting the best for our children, grandchildren, and community.



Gay-Straight Alliance club coming soon to student body

Establishment of an LGBT-focused club encourages personal growth, acceptance among students

THE ED BOARD

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ALLIE NELSON
KYLIE POLING
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JESSICA TEBBEN
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ETHAN YDE
ETHAN ZWEIG

After the United States Supreme Court asserted it would not review any appeals related to states' gay marriage bans, Indiana joined the country in a celebration of equality and acceptance. With this historic ruling, though, comes apprehension and uncertainty.

To combat this general uneasiness, especially among students, Leah Valentine (12) hopes to establish a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club to promote "support and acceptance" among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight students, according to the group's change.org petition. Valentine started the petition on Oct. 3, and by Oct. 13, it had gained more than 100 supporters, and had 138 supporters as of press time.

"(LGBT) students need to feel accepted and need somewhere to feel safe," Valentine said.

Now more than ever, students need a comfortable and accessible place to express their sexuality and gender identity and find reassurance from their peers. This renders a GSA club absolutely vital to the student body and community itself. This would not be a curricular club, meaning it would not directly correlate to core material taught in school, like the Academic Decathlon or Spell Bowl teams do. Key Club and Euchre Club are examples of clubs considered to be non-curricular.

The parent and student handbook states "any new club/activity must be tied to (the Homestead) curriculum in order to be approved." This is explicitly stated in the handbook, but is not necessarily stringently enforced.

A GSA reinforces Homestead's educational focus by promoting "students' personal growth," as abstained by the school's vision.

In the same way, a GSA club would encourage personal growth amongst the student body. Because non-curricular clubs, like Key Club, are allowed under the federal Equal Access Act, public high schools must allow the formation of non-curricular clubs as long as they do not incite harm, including a GSA.

In 2011, Arne Duncan, Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights for the U.S. Department of Education, wrote a general letter to school corporations encouraging the formation of LGBT-oriented clubs in order to reduce bullying and affirm a general acceptance of LGBT students in the learning environment. Duncan stated "by allowing students to discuss difficult issues openly and honestly, in a civil manner, our schools become forums for combating ignorance, bigotry, hatred, and discrimination."

"What we try to do as a school is be supportive of students in any way we can that's appropriate, and in this case, that's what we're going to do," Park Ginder, principal, said.

All students are important, and LGBT students who may feel uncomfortable or oppressed in their school environment should have every opportunity to collaborate with others who are accepting and supportive.

"As anyone who's lived through high school can tell you, it's a period that is often portrayed in movies as the best time in your life," Scott Hill, English teacher and club sponsor, said. "But it is also a time of change and conflict for a lot of people, and as people are discovering a lot about who they are. There are a lot of people who probably feel isolated by some of the stories that they are living right now and (if there is) anything we can do to make one Spartan...feel more welcome here at this school, we should try to do that."

Having a GSA available to students would not only provide a positive and constructive support group for students, but would also shed light to a civil rights issue many teenagers may not fully understand. Instituting this club is a beneficial and needed measure to be taken in order for LGBT students to feel accepted and welcome in the school community.

"The most important thing for us is to exist," Hill said. "There's a symbolic value to the presence of a club that is about compassion and inclusion. We're just one more club, and, like all clubs, we're here for our members."

THE BOTTOM LINE: A GSA would promote acceptance and combat adversity in the learning environment, which reaffirms the educational focus's vision.

Girls continue to 'ugh' at anyone wearing Uggs or yoga pants

Judging a person as boring or plain based on their outfit is demeaning and inconsiderate

BY KATIE MAHER
Buisiness Manager

One general stereotype that is often the punchline to every joke and avidly popular due to social media accounts generating the problem is being a "basic girl". A "basic" girl is defined to liking regular interests such as Starbucks, yoga pants, mainstream movies and books, social media and boys. To associate indulging in these categories as "basic" is ridiculous in itself, since it suggests that only a few interests can completely sum up a person's mind and soul. After actually understanding a person's entire being past if they wear yoga pants or not will reveal that the stereotype does not even exist in actual people, but only on the parody accounts.

The term was coined at first as a joke, but like most jokes, the punchline has the capability to deeply offend and demean people. Calling a girl basic can bring her down in the same manner as almost any term which takes aim at a person's identity. As street harassment condenses a person down to their appearance, suggesting that someone is "basic" reduces that person to being less than what is considered acceptable. The term is stripping a person to having no uniqueness; suggesting she is just an ignorant, latte-dependent person desperately searching for the nearest Victoria's Secret and does not have any ambitions higher than kissing Channing Tatum.

There is no purpose taking possessions and food that people enjoy and taunting them. Before labeling a girl "basic" for enjoying "The Notebook," ask her what she loves and feels when watching the movie. It all comes down to breaking down the barriers, and understanding a person's inner self instead of just the presented self.

Remember that it is okay to have common interests; they are a fundamental part of the connections created between human beings. Sharing some passions and fashion ideas from others does not mean a person is unoriginal and shallow. Everyone is linked with each other in some way by what we share, but what is enjoyed and loved without force is what makes every individual unique. Ironically, there is such thing as conforming to nonconformity as well, and this can be a counter effect for those desperately trying to avoid the dreaded "basic" label. Let people naturally discover and pursue what they love without the input of others. The term "basic" is stapled to every girl simultaneously clad in yoga pants and gripping a pumpkin spice latte without any thought to who the girl wearing the yoga pants is on the inside, or what her dreams and passions and stories might hold.

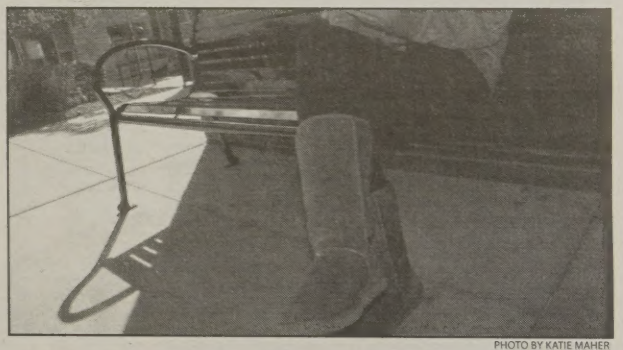


PHOTO BY KATIE MAHER

"Typical girl" sits on shopping center bench clad in the stretotipacal basic girl outfit. Some people would be quick to call her "basic" because of her outfit choice, but fail to consider her interests and passions.

It is time for women to stop planting each other down in the same manner magazines do. Empower one another. Share each other's stories and passions. Laugh together over a latte- they taste great. Do not become a hateful, walking Twitter account; doing so ultimately makes one a machine.

Haunted History: the Real West Central

BY ALLIE NELSON
Executive Editor

West Central may look like just the downtown neighborhood with antiquated architecture every city seems to have. However, it has a rich history, a past of haunted stories and paranormal activity. By exploring the network of residential streets on a seasonal tour, hidden secrets of West Central's past are exposed.

PHOTOS BY ALLIE NELSON

Cruising along the one-way streets of downtown Fort Wayne, no signs of paranormal behavior are immediately apparent. The familiar storefronts and landmarks reflect no feelings of uneasiness, no fear of the unknown past.

Although they are unaware of the city's history, those who call the West Central neighborhood home are living in a spooky setting of stories old and new plaguing the residential blocks and updated buildings. Those who casually travel the sidewalks pass sites of mystery, murder and fright, and, possibly, they do not even know what surrounds them.

Despite their cryptic past, West Central resident Angela Aneiros is drawn to the older areas of Fort Wayne because of their original antiquity.

"I live in one of those giant houses that was split into apartments," Aneiros said. "I liked it because it was an actual house and because it had a lot of character. It wasn't cookie cutter. So that's what brought me to West Central."

However, the neighborhood is not just tree-lined roads and colonial architecture. It hosts the sites of legends fit for a conversation of ghost stories around a campfire.

> "I like haunted stories, and I like to be spooked out so (the legends) make West Central more charming."
> -Angela Aneiros, West Central Resident

"It's definitely got history," George Guido said of his West Central home. "In 1983 there were two guys who owned this house, and they had rented rooms out to some people, and one of their tenants didn't pay so they evicted him out of his house. He went to his cousin's house, and they came over to get his personal

ENTER IF YOU DARE

62% of people would still consider buying a house that is haunted

SOURCE: REALTOR.COM

PFEIFFER HOUSE

Fort Wayne's Pfeiffer House, located at the intersection of West Wayne Street and Fairfield Avenue, was built in 1905. It served as the childhood home of a judge and his children, Fred and Margarite Pfeiffer. Perched on the site of a stop on the Underground Railroad, the Pfeiffer House is linked to the origins of Lutheran Hospital and the Indiana Women's Rights Movement. In 2009, the home was featured on A&E's "Paranormal State" and was declared to host haunted activities. Some observers claim to have seen moving salt and pepper shakers and opening and closings doors. Many believe Fred Pfeiffer has returned to his former home since his death in 1994. Now a "unique café," Pfeiffer House is a "little gem," according to a reviewer on downtownfortwayne.com.

BURIAL GROUND NO MORE

Civic leader William Rockhill settled in Fort Wayne in the early nineteenth century. As an advocate of the first railroad line, Rockhill also built homes in the West Central neighborhood, which remain today. He was said to find what he thought to be an ancient Native American burial ground as he surveyed land for construction. However, shortly after his discovery of the hill,, the remnants of the discovered bodies were, as they are now, nowhere to be found. The street, named Rockhill St., remains and is home to a portion of West Central residents.

property. They ended up taking the owners into the basement and killing them. Both of the guys were caught, and the guy...was killed by lethal injection in 2003."

Despite his knowledge of his home's past, Guido believes whatever happened in the neighborhood of West Central happened in the past.

"I've not been scared of anything in the house," Guido said. "It's an old house and it's creaky, but I've never heard of anything. When I bought the house I went down and stood in the basement and I figured if anything were going to happen, it would have happened then in the dark."

Some downtown residents outside the boundaries of West Central are aware of the stories attached to the city's rich history, but are not phased by their connections.

"I hear a lot of stories about places like The Embassy, but personally they don't scare me," Gabby Hollman (12), downtown resident, said. "I don't believe in spirits staying on Earth and haunting places. If something weird is going on, then I think there may be something else at play."

However, to Aneiros, the haunted history is festive. Because of her enthusiasm about the Halloween season, Aneiros decided to look into the neighborhood's past by participating in a historic tour.

"As soon as I found out there was (a tour) in (my) neighborhood, I thought it would be cool to hear the alleged stories," Aneiros said. "I like haunted stories, and I like to be spooked out so they make (West Central) more charming. That makes me sound really weird, but that's okay."

The walking tour, ARCH Haunted History: The Darker Side of West Central, traces city streets to unveil the secrets of Fort Wayne's past. In my search for haunted places, I happened to go along with Aneiros and witness the claims of the mysterious stories for myself.

FORT WAYNE GRAVEDIGGERS

Upon the establishment of the Fort Wayne Medical College in 1876, there was a shortage of cadavers for medical students to use as research. Body snatching from local cemeteries became prevalent, as 30 robbed graves from Lindenwood Cemetery were reported. One of those stolen bodies belonged to a girl of the Ewing family, the group after which Ewing Street is named. Throughout this frantic time period, people worried about the safety of those buried. "'The dead were not resting in peace,' whispered residents," according to the tour guide.

LOMBARD HOUSE

Born in 1908, Jane Alice Peters, better known as actress Carol Lombard, who starred in movies including "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" and "To Be or Not to Be", grew up in the quaint, cottagey home-turned-bed and breakfast. Her childhood home, now called the Lombard House, remains in the West Central neighborhood at 704 Rockhill St. The Hollywood star died in a plane crash on one of her frequent trips between home and the West Coast. She is said to haunt her Fort Wayne home, as well as Hollywood's Roosevelt Hotel.

Seniors prepare for college applications

School is hard enough as it is. When you're trying to get good grades in order to get into college, it is easy to forget about actually applying to college in order to get in. But applying for college is hard, too. When you're trying to apply for college, getting good grades in order to get into college is put on the back burner. I've seen both happen. In fact, I've had both happen to me.

To seniors, I do not have any advice. I'm in the same boat as you are.

Perhaps the single most overwhelming aspect of applying for college is actually finding the time to go through and fill out the entire Common Application. Even then, not all schools accept the Common App, so you have to go back and answer all the same questions again, one more time and maybe three or four more times before all of your applications are finished. It's tedious - and expensive - work.

Speaking of paying for things, what's up with college tuition? I think all seniors can relate when I say looking at amount of money you have to spend to get an education can take your breath away. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors need to start saving now. Babysit your neighbors and sell one of your kidneys because you're going to need the money later.

JESS SAYIN'

BY JESSICA TEBBEN
Life Editor

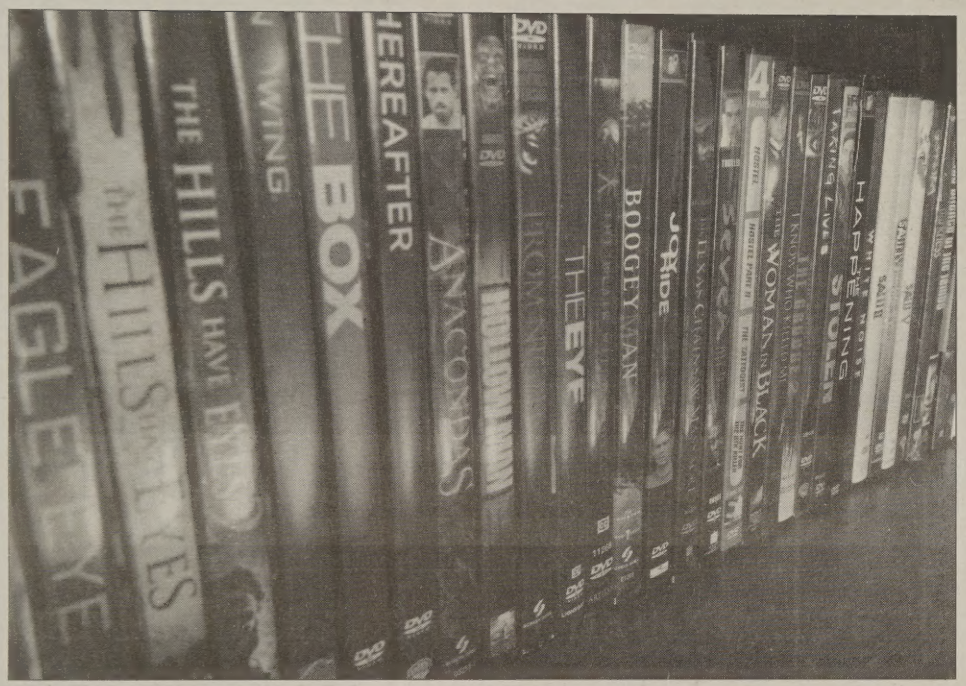
Applying and paying are the fundamentals of college preparation. It's basically imperative that you visit every single college in Indiana before you make your visit. You might as well tour every college in the United States while you're at it.

On top of it all, you have to write essays, and you have to have other people write essays for you before a very strict deadline that could potentially cost you thousands of dollars if it's missed. And some colleges look at first semester senior year grades, so if you mess up on this, it could also potentially cost you thousands of dollars. No pressure, though.

Luckily for us – or rather, luckily for those of us who have chosen to apply before the early application deadline – Nov. 1 is approaching rapidly and this will all be behind us. Or the quickly approaching deadline could be your ultimate downfall, which is the boat in which I am currently.

With everything taken into consideration, it's all going to be worth it. If you apply yourself to school and also to college, your experience will be pleasant. Find a balance and a way to go about it while minimizing stress. To my fellow seniors, we'll be free soon. To everyone else, good luck.

Falling for FALL



Scary movies are the cheapest way to have fun with friends or family at home during the fall season.

BY KELSEY HERBER
Life Writer

Often, teens complain there is nothing to do in the afternoons when school takes up most of their time. Most fun places don't quite offer excitement after 2:35 p.m. on weekdays. On days where students are swamped with homework and jobs, there is little time for entertainment.

Of course, there are times when all homework is done and finding something to do is a struggle, so some fun ideas have been acquired to do on those slow days.

One of the most popular pastimes teenagers love to participate in is sports and other school teams, which includes enough variety for everyone to enjoy.

"I'm on the rifle team at Bishop Luers, so that's fun after school for me," Rachel Hoger (9) said.

Teenagers are often interested in participating in outdoor amusement, and there are plenty of things to do outside like getting lost in a corn maze or taking a hot-air balloon ride (for those extravagant types).

Tailgating to the upcoming Spartan football games is an easy way to get to know new people and have a fun start to the weekend.

If being a night owl sounds like a fun idea, then getting spooked by any of the haunted Halloween attractions Fort Wayne has to offer, such as the Black Forest and Haunted Castle, among others which will always make for fond memories.

"On Halloween night, I like to hand out candy to all the kids," Aldo Guzman (12) said.

Haunted places not only send chills down spines during this haunted season but scary movies do as well. Curling up in a blanket with friends at home is the cheapest way for festive fun.

Fort Wayne suggests other thrilling activities, such as the Johnny Appleseed festival (which was on Sept. 20-21), the Halloween Pet Parade and Fright Night in downtown Fort Wayne, which were both on Oct. 18.

Everyone will agree bonfires with s'mores are a must-have for frigid fall nights. When the fire in the pit dies down, whip out a big bowl of steaming chili with a side of salted pumpkin seeds and a dessert of apple or pumpkin pie to warm guests up.

"I love going to bonfires with my friends in the fall," Anna Ekdahl (9) said. "I try to eat all the same stuff, like s'mores, year-round though."

For the people who love the calm, cool and collected lifestyle, there are always fun stay-at-home undertakings such as learning how to knit. Knitting is a very relaxing way to spend down time.

Halloween fanatics swoon over the idea of one-upping their neighbors. For this reason, a new way of growing pumpkins has been unleashed. Simply find a large plastic mold, preferably shaped like a head, and grow pumpkins inside it so they later turn out shaped like the mold, according to homeguides.com.

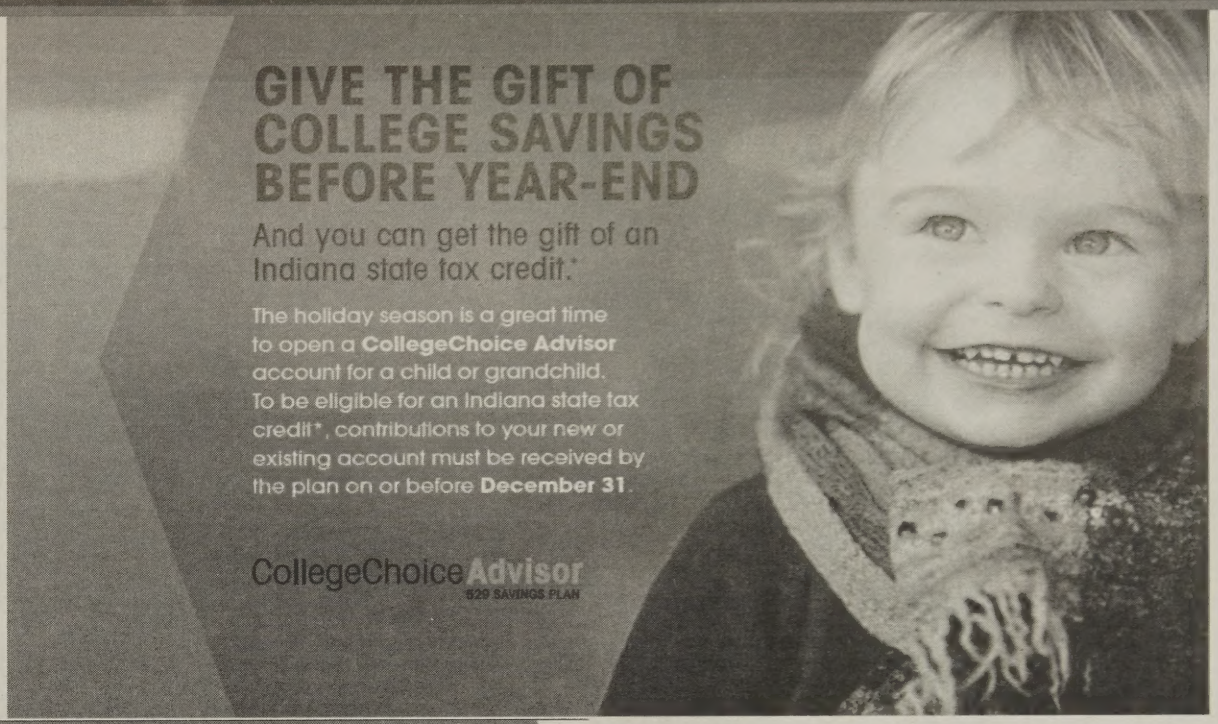
Speaking of showing off to neighbors, another way to win the competition for best Halloween house is making homemade Halloween costumes and throwing a mysterious party filled with games and wide eyes, leaving guests exhausted by the end of the night.

Staying on the simple side and just hanging out with friends is also a fun way to end the spooky season.

"I like to stay in and just watch scary movies," Werner Vicente (11) said.

Last but not least, throwing a Thanksgiving potluck is the obvious candidate for bringing friends and family together and sharing good food and memories.

"I'm looking forward to going to my grandpa's house on Thanksgiving day and watching the Macy's parade," Hoger said.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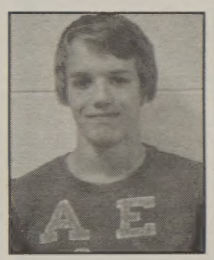
Loyalty to sports clubs not valued enough by athletes

With new sports seasons underway across the world, many people will likely notice well-known athletes have switched teams. Big names in sports frequently transfer, either by being traded or sold. There is not much that remains of loyalty to an athlete's club, but there can be several reasons for a player to simply get up and move out, disregarding the fans of their club that have grown to know them.

There are several motives for a player to move on to a different club, though the most popular seems to be money. New contracts offered by clubs are attractive, and that may be a reason why star returner Devin Hester left the Chicago Bears for the Atlanta Falcons this summer. Though Hester claims Chicago was going a different direction, the underlying reasons are not entirely concrete. Salaries fuel many decisions surrounding an athlete's career, so it would be no surprise if these were Hester's motives.

'KOWSKI'S CORNER



BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Sports Editor

The loyalty Hester had towards the Chicago Bears across his seven seasons was erased by his recent move. Ashley Cole, a former soccer prospect playing for Arsenal in England, also left his club and his large following, joining Chelsea in return for a paycheck twice as big. Despite being an important figure for the future of Arsenal, Cole left simply to receive more money, and was aptly named "Cashley" Cole by his heartbroken former fans. Now derided for his money-seeking pursuits, was it worth it for Cole to leave the club, knowing that his move would be criticized?

A slap to the face of fans and eternal denouncement is not an ideal outcome for players who sacrifice their loyalty. Players who stay at the same club throughout the duration of their careers are respected, their devotion admirable. One such player, Paolo Maldini of Italy, is the quintessential example, first playing for AC Milan's youth system as a ten year old and the first team at 17, he finally retired 25 years later after a long and illustrious career. Maldini spent his entire 31-year career at AC Milan, his dedication to the same club nothing short of impressive.

Perhaps it should be a goal of athletes to stay at the same club, valuing loyalty over wealth. Fame and success can be achieved both ways, and almost all fans value allegiance to the same club. Loyalty should be seen more often in the sports world.

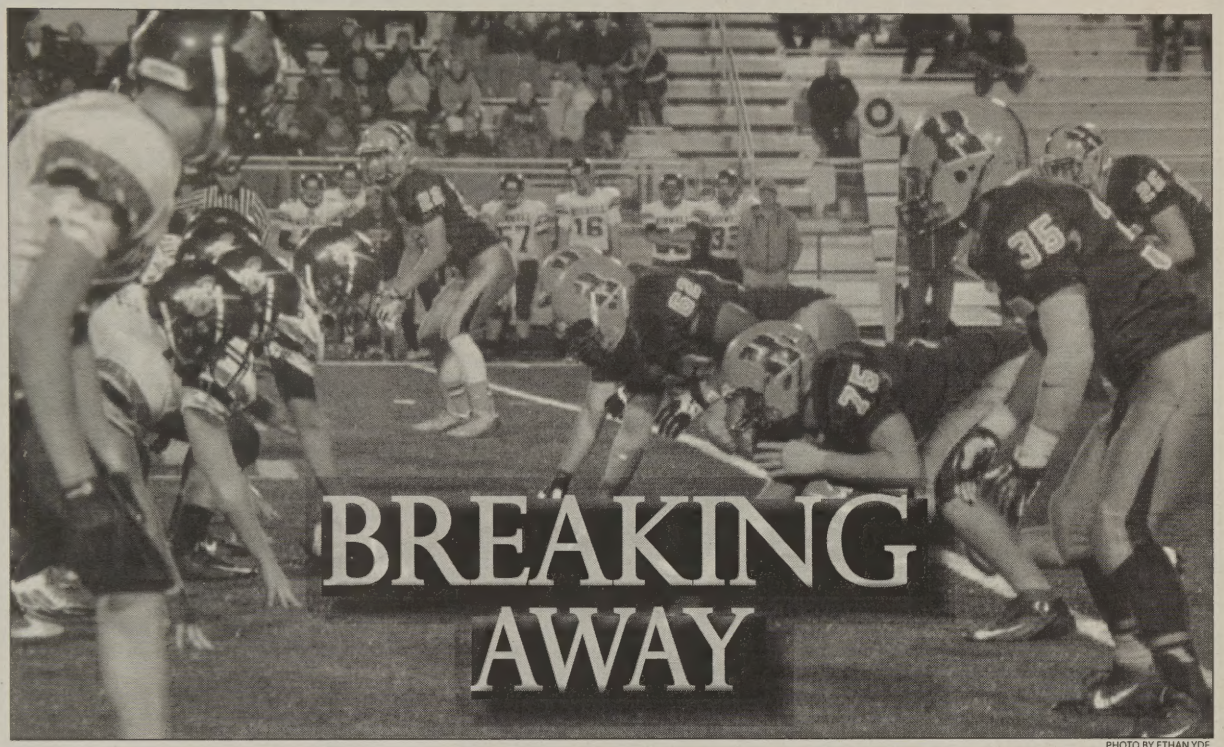


PHOTO BY ETHAN YDE

This season, the football team won against teams like Belmont, who it lost to last year, and Dekalb, where the score had a four point difference.

Football team hopes to continue improvement in its postseason

BY **ETHAN YDE**
Copy Editor

The football team has succeeded immensely this season, holding a record of eight wins and only two losses in the regular season. The dedication of the team to improve in teamwork, communication and work ethic has shown through greatly on the field.

"We've drastically improved from the start of the season to now," Luke Cooper (12) said. "When the season began, our defense had many questions, and we struggled to stop opposing offenses. Now we're clicking on all cylinders at the perfect time of the year."

The season was, for the most part, a breeze, but it had some rough edges. For a couple of weeks, the team was not performing as well as it wanted, but the players were able to quickly turn things around in time for important regular season games.

"The game against Norwell was the best game of our season, in my opinion," Logan Ormsby (12) said. "We had a rough two weeks before that, and I think the Norwell game was the first game in which both sides, the offense and defense, were really clicking and playing a good game of football."

However, Norwell was not the only highlight of the season. The team also pulled off a win against Belmont, another team it lost to last year. Players were excited to be able to redeem themselves, and the wins gave them high hopes for the rest of the season.

Another instance that gave more confidence to the players, especially one player in particular, was an interception run that won the game against DeKalb.

"The biggest play this season, in my opinion, was when Matt Anderson (10) got a 99-yard pick-six after DeKalb was on the one yard line, and we were only up by four points," Noah Meeks (11) said.

> **"Each game, I made it my goal to play lower and more physically, and I believe I have progressed over the course of the season."**
> -Luke Cooper (12)

Along with the successes and triumphs of the team as a whole, players had individual goals as well. Because each component is equally as important on the field, players made it their priority to contribute to the team as whole-heartedly as possible.

"This year I began playing a new position: defensive end," Cooper said. "My main goal was mainly to get adjusted to being a defensive player and making an impact on that end. Each game, I made it my goal to play lower and more physically, and I believe I have progressed over the course of the season."

When the regular season came to an end, with a key win against New Haven to close it off, the varsity team was ready to make their mark in the post-season. The next step for the team is the sectional playoffs. The team won the first game, but today the team has the real competition, rival, Carroll. If the team can win this, it will advance past sectionals and get one step further on the road to state.

Regionals is sure to be against a tough opponent for the team, as it is so close to the state finals, but the players and coaches alike understand that if they want to compete in the state competition, they have to leave everything on the field.

"Personally, I want to do my best for the team so that we can go as far as we can in the postseason," Ormsby said. "Now we are just looking to improve in the postseason, win regionals and hopefully move on to state."

Girls soccer team loses regionals, reflects on season

Close game against Carroll in regional game marks end of postseason journey for team

BY AWBREI VACHON
Writer

The girls soccer team dribbled all the way to regional championship this season, losing in a close match against Carroll with a score of 1-0 after an intense round of overtime and penalty kicks. Despite the devastation, the girls worked hard this year and came away with good memories.

Each year, it is imperative for a team to adapt to the change in the roster. Between the senior class moving on to bigger stages in their lives and the incoming freshmen filling spots in the shift of positions, there is a lot to get used to and accommodate for.

The current seniors had a particularly difficult time acclimating to the new responsibilities of leadership on the team, and faced difficulties in understanding how the seniority role works and how to be the examples for the underclassman.

"It's hard trying to get everyone to come together when it's a new team and get everyone to treat (each other) the same and try to get them to cooperate so we can be successful on and off the field," Morgann Williams (12) said.

With only four seniors this year, it was challenging to learn how to guide the team in the best direction, and use the proper tone of voice to establish authority over the rest of the teammates, which was hard to do considering the girls had always been so used to being able to joke around with each other and have fun.

"I've grown up with the people who are seniors now, so it's hard to take them seriously," Isabel Wells (11) said. "We lost a lot of really good seniors, and (this year's) seniors were having trouble adapting to the role, and we were having trouble adapting to them as well."

The senior girls spent the season trying to mimic past strategies of success.

"Whatever (the seniors) did last year, it worked because we got to semi-state," Williams said. "We're all individually really good players, but we've had problems coming together and trying to find a way to win."

Katherine Metz, head coach, did her best to challenge the girls as much as she could, including scheduling tough games against highly ranked teams such as Fishers, Noblesville and Hamilton Southeastern.

"I put pressure on myself first to be the best we can be every day and compete against the best level of girl soccer players in the state, which is why we set our schedule to be what it is this year," Metz said. "I'm a big believer in 'if you want to be the best, you've got to play the best,' so we're constantly trying to find games that help make us better."

Even though competition is important to Metz as well as the girls on the team, soccer is more than just a game to them.

Sam McArdle (9) dribbles the ball away from the Carroll defender. Following the regional games, the players reviewed their successes and failures, which influenced their overall athletic performance.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PATTY BUTLER

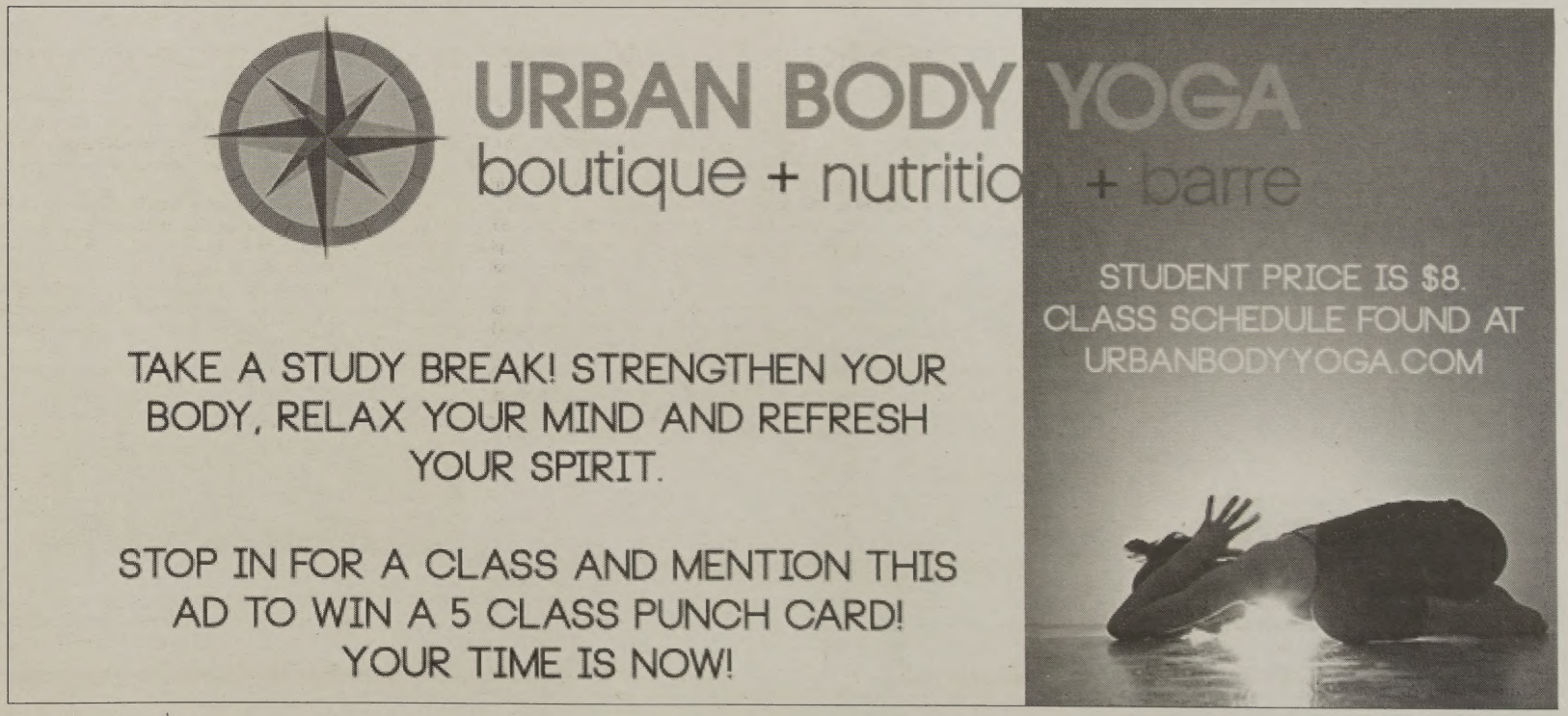
"Whenever I'm stressed I'll look forward to going to soccer," Wells said. "If I have a rough day at school, I can always count on going to my friends at practice and have them be there for me."

For the seniors, this year marks the last season of their high school soccer careers, and the memories they have made will stick with them.

"It's been surreal," Williams said. "I've had great experiences, and I loved all the girls I got to know, and I'm going to seriously miss it. It's honestly been the best time of my life."

Metz, as a coach, not only teaches tactics and strategies, but also strives to teach the girls life lessons along the way.

"You have to enjoy every moment," Metz said. "You never know when it's going to end, so you've got to take advantage of your opportunities but enjoy it too along the way."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Students Prepare for Black Friday

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The Spartana has, and may continue to, operate as a limited open forum for the free exchange of ideas.

Staff members support the First Amendment in its entirety and oppose censorship in any form. The content of the paper is determined by the student staff. In cases of potentially controversial material, the Editorial Board will meet to decide the content of the newspaper. The staff will be assisted by the adviser in areas of professional ethics and legalities.

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Those that could cause a substantial and material disruption to the school day will not be printed. Letters can be e-mailed to The Spartana at thespartana@gmail.com

Spartan Alliance Band ends season, places high

Marching band earns 3rd at State finals, 8th at Bands of America Grand National Finals

BY GWEN MIDDLETON
News Writer

The marching band season has come to its annual end, flourishing at the ISSMA State Finals competition and, after not participating for over 20 years, competing at BOA (Bands of America) against marching bands from states such as Texas, Florida and others. For the state competition, the band traveled to the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 8 and came out with third place. Avon High School of Avon, Ind. dominated in first place, and Carmel High School of Carmel, Ind. placed as runner-up.

"I'm a little sad that we didn't place first, but third place in the state of Indiana is still an achievement on its own," Brandan Quick (10) said.

Typically ISSMA State would be the band's last competition, but this year, Steve Barber and Brad Wadkins, directors, decided to take on the BOA (Bands of America) competition. 97 bands from around the country competed in the Super Regional and Grand National competitions at Lucas Oil Stadium, hoping to obtain the champion will all compete for the 1st place title.

"I think that this year's show (was equipped for) BOA, which was a very extravagant experience," Cara Allen (10) said. "It was a bit of a new experience because it seemed very out there for our band. But when we got to BOA, we saw it was just as big at other schools."

The title of the show theme this year was "Dance of the Wind Spirit." Mushrooms with varied sizes scattered the field and a large tree was planted in the upper right hand corner of the field, when observing from the director's viewpoint. The color guard girls flaunted grand, white wings on their backs which were supported by buckled halters.

"I like this year's theme because the story is for us to write rather than the actual writers of the show (to write for us)," Allen said. "They gave us the freedom to make our characters who we wanted them to be and we got to be very artistic and personal."

The 2014 season brought new ambitions for the band as the staff reintroduced BOA to the students. The band got to interact with bands they would have never met otherwise time.

"My favorite part of the season was definitely BOA Super Regionals because it was our first experience at BOA in a very long time," Allen said. "We just went out there and gave them the performance we could which was huge itself. Then finishing fourth above bands that are consistently in BOA was huge also."

The band continued their BOA journey back at Lucas Oil Stadium Nov. 13-14 in the preliminary competition. They then moved on to compete at the stadium Nov. 15 for the Grand National Competition, which included the aforementioned two days of prelims, Nov. 13-14, semifinals and finals.

In the BOA Grand Nationals Final competition, the school's overall score was tied with Wando High School of Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. However, in the event of a tie, the higher general effect score wins, which was Wando. The school obtained eighth place in Finals.

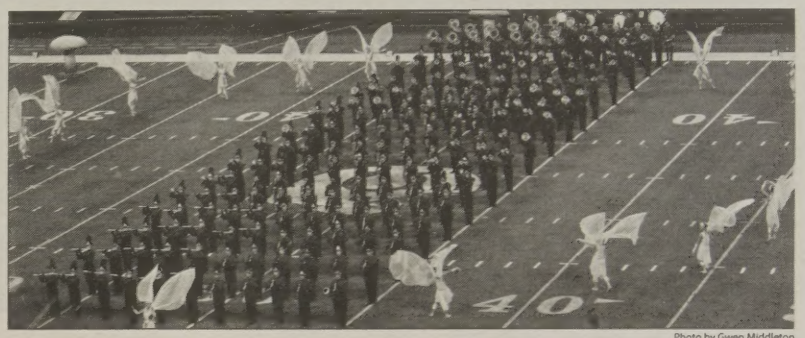


Photo by Gwen Middleton

Spartan Alliance Band performs at Lucas Oil Stadium during Bands of America competition.

"BOA is a great experience and I feel like we (did) very well at Nationals," Allen said.

Every student and viewer had his or her favorite part of the show.

"My favorite part about the band show this year is the music," Savanna Rodocker (11) said. It is just beautiful and so well performed."

Many believe the band season proved successful in its capability of drawing the audience in through intriguing props, mystical Wind Spirit color guard and animated band members. Even though the first place title was not claimed at ISSMA state, the band members found satisfaction in the enjoyment they provided for their viewers.

It is believed that the band's success is highly achieved through its outstanding instructors and staff.

"I think that we have great instructors working with us," Allen said. "They gave up a lot of their time to help us out with BOA, and they're just fantastic people."

The spontaneity of this year's band show has left band members, their families and nationwide audiences eager for what next year will bring. The students are already thinking to next year's season. Every year the bar seems to be raised, and so they work to better themselves every year.

"I am absolutely excited for next year because that means a whole new show to learn, and that's (what excites me) perfect for the fall 2015 season," Quick said.

School receives "A" grade for academic talent

Indiana Department of Education recognizes college readiness and graduation rates

BY MALLORY MCCAULEY
Online Editor

Students and teachers have shown their teaching and academic talents through the achieved "A" school rating. Every year, the Indiana Department of Education reviews each school's success and, based off of their standards and the areas they observe, elementary, middle and high schools will receive a grade, A-F, based on their success.

The preliminary grade is based on student performance, and this may go up or down depending upon student performance. Overall, Indiana has three main goals it wishes to see high schools achieve. The schools which meet the three goals of a 90 percent student pass rate in math ECAs, 25 percent pass rate on an AP or IB exam or earn college credits during high school and 90 percent of students graduate with a diploma would receive grades on the higher end of the scale.

High schools receive points in each of the following: English 10 ECA, Algebra 1 ECA, graduation rate and college readiness. Each high school's success is based on a 4 point scale, 4 being the highest and best score a school can achieve. The high school will be scored on that scale in each of the named categories, and each score will be multiplied by a percentage (English 10 ECA: 30%, Algebra 1 ECA: 30%, graduation rate: 30% and college readiness: 10%) and ultimately added together to determine the grade that school will receive.

"Receiving a good grade is important, but (the administration) does not base all of our school's value off of that one grade," Park Ginder, principal, said.

Although the Indiana Department of Education's formula for grading each school does reflect important standards a high school should have in order to instill student success,

"I am not surprised (that we received an 'A' grade); we have great students, parental support and teachers, and this was a great achievement."

-Cindy Husar, teacher

the grade itself does not hold the utmost importance among Homestead's administration.

"I do not think the grade really reflects everything about a school," Philip Downs, superintendent, said. "Unfortunately, it is the thing people look for which makes it much more important than it should be."

Homestead has long been one of the numerous high schools in the state which have received the "A" grade. Its success in the categories of ECAs and graduation rate has been a major factor in helping to maintain this superior grade. However, over the last few years, the school has begun to offer more AP classes and dual credit classes, which both contribute to the college readiness score, thus helping to improve the score received in that category.

"I'm not surprised (that we received an 'A' grade); we have great students, parental support and teachers, and this was a great achievement," Cindy Husar, art teacher, said.

Receiving an A or B grade is a notable, respectable achievement. However, receiving a score not to the highest standards does not, in the eyes of teachers and administration, mean that said school would be suitable for a student to attend.

"There are other schools in the city and state that did not receive the 'A' rating that I would be happy to send my own daughter to," Ginder said.

Though arguably not the ultimate deciding factor in if a school is a quality school, the "A" grade is applauded among teachers.

PHOTO BY TESSA VIRIGILIO

Joey Zirille(12), Peter Haffner, TJ Bishop(11) and Bailey Miller pose with awards after international DECA competition.

DECA starts off promising year

Popular business club returns after placing at internationals

TESSA VIRGILIO
News Editor

Many student clubs and organizations begin at the opening of the school year. One close-knit club, however, begins in early November and is eagerly awaited by its passionate participants.

DECA is a club centered on the development of business and marketing skill sets in students. The school's DECA chapter attends competitive events together, immersing it in real-world problems and situations the members may have to solve on the spot. In another event, students give presentations on expanding businesses, among other topics.

Brian McNeal, one DECA sponsor, brings the group to the annual local and national competitions.

"Right now we are going to be around 140 students," McNeal said. "Students are always welcome."

This year, the district competition will occur Jan. 10, the state competition will be in March in Indianapolis, and the team will travel to the 2014-15 International Career Development Conference (ICDC) competition in Orlando the last week of April.

"(Orlando is) a great destination," McNeal said. "The students really like Orlando because, obviously, there are so many things to do."

Last year proved exceptionally prosperous in achievements for the club.

"We had an international winner; TJ Bishop (11) won his event in the international competition (in Atlanta at ICDC), only the second time in the history of Homestead," McNeal said, adding the last person at the school to receive first place at an ICDC international competition was a valedictorian in 1998, which makes Bishop's achievement in his sophomore year distinguishable.

"We were awesome last year as a team," Bishop said. "Personally, I did finish first in Hospitality and Tours in Professional Selling...On top of that, ICDC is incredibly strenuous just to make it to finals, and finals mean you make the top 10."

At the state competition last year, the school's DECA chapter finished fourth overall at state. Every year brings intense competition, and it will remain this way in the coming season. At the district level, around 400 students from nine high schools will compete for champion titles in different categories. At the state and national competitions, there are even more. When one reaches the international ICDC level, there are around 30,000 individuals overall. It can seem difficult to move on in competition, yet this depends upon one's event.

"Just to give a comparison, Carmel has 500 high school students in their DECA chapter," McNeal said, "So when you're competing against them, it's hard because...you only have 100 students competing."

After participating in the club, many first-year members fall in love with DECA and want to go farther in competition, so the extra work pays off.

"DECA's a lot of fun and I love it, but you definitely have to manage your time well between being fully prepared to compete, competing, studying to take your test at DECA and schoolwork." Bishop said.

William Milne (9) is one of the many DECA members particapting in the essay portion of the competition.

"Evan Castle (10) and Matthew Schreck (9) are in my group. Evan knows how to do it, and Matt and I have no idea so I guess we'll probably learn from him." Milne said.

For students like Milne, exceptional performance can literally pay off at these DECA events.

"There's over $350,000 up for scholarship grabs, and if you do well in certain competitions, you get a guaranteed $100 up to $1,000," Bishop said.

Amidst the numerous competitive opportunities that entail joining DECA, the coordinators hope for something other than placement success in these events.

"My goal is individualized for students," McNeal said, "I want them to get the best and most they can (out of it). Whether they're a strong student or one of my average students, I like to see their individual growth."

Teacher re-elected to Aboite Township Board

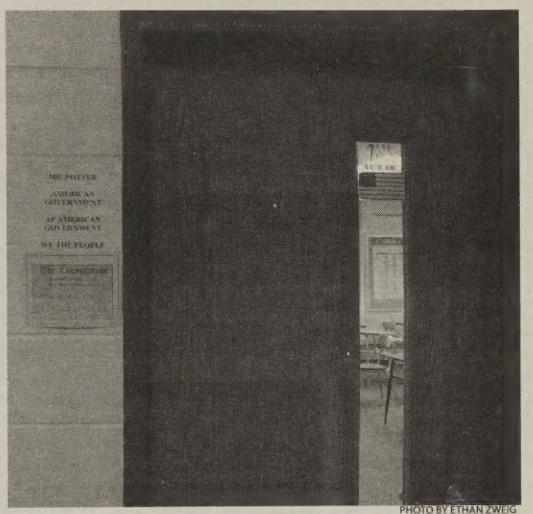


PHOTO BY ETHAN ZWEIG

Teacher Keith Potter aims to give back to community.

Many teachers hope to play a significant role in the community alongside their foremost duty of educating the next generation of entrepreneurs, engineers, and so forth. Keith Potter, AP US Government teacher, is a familiar face to students and achieves this secondary position of communal involvement. Potter has been on the Aboite Township Board for eight years, and was elected for a third term earlier this month.

When he's not teaching, Potter enjoys working with his fellow teachers and getting work done. He was gracious enough to sit down for an interview earlier this month.

Spartana: For how many years have you been teaching?

Potter: I taught for five years at a school in Michigan, and I've been at Homestead for 33 years. I've enjoyed my time here, and I hope to keep teaching.

Spartana: What was your motive to be on the Aboite Township Board?

Potter: This is my third term on the board, and I want to contribute to my community as much as it gives back (to me). I really want to get involved in where I live.

Spartana: What makes this term different from earlier years?

Potter: This time isn't very different from my previous experiences. I suppose with changes in (the community), something might come up. I expect this term to be very similar to the previous ones.

Spartana: Would you recommend this position to any students or colleagues?

Potter: If anyone is interested in helping and governing locally, then I would recommend this position. It's great to contribute to the community.

--Ethan Zweig

Ebola concern in West Africa, not Northeast Indiana

Containment, vigilance greatly reduce chance of virus outbreak in the United States

BY ETHAN YDE
Copy Editor

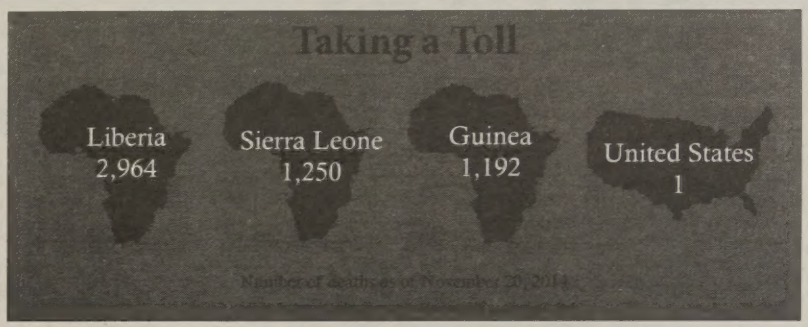
Ebola, a hot topic around the world, is not as big of a deal in America as many believe it to be. It seems every time a person shows symptoms of being ill, somebody makes a joke that the person has Ebola, even though the chances are miniscule. The Ebola virus should not be a concern in the United States, as it is unlikely to spread quickly and is easy to control.

The main reason Ebola does not deserve the scare it is causing in America is because it is so easy to be contained in our current situation. The disease is fatal of course, but it can only be spread through bodily fluids, so it is harmless to those uninfected unless poorly contained. Ebola patients have been quarantined, people in contact with them have been examined, and travelers in Africa have been thoroughly tested and warned about the virus. The Center for Disease Control has worked diligently on containing Ebola in the US and facing the virus head-on.

In addition to the CDC's ability to control the virus, the country as a whole has a better healthcare system than any African nation and is able to treat patients far more properly than the countries of Ebola's origin. The medical facilities of our country are top notch, with better affordability for those who need it. When Ebola patients need treatment, hospitals are quick to provide nutritional and comfort care, while providing surgical interventions if necessary.

Furthermore, a vaccine is currently being developed, and a new antibody has been discovered to have neutralizing effects to the disease. Countries like Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, which are the most severely affected, lack the proper health care to combat Ebola. Because of the excellent medical facilities in the US, almost all of the fears of the disease can be discarded.

The notion that the Ebola virus is easily controlled is evident by the current patient statistics in America. At the present time, there have only been nine patients diagnosed, and only one of those patients died of the disease. Also, the one person who died did not pick up the virus in America; he brought it over from West Africa. Not a single person diagnosed in America has died of Ebola in the past two months the virus has dwelled in the country. Due to certain factors present in the US, it clearly does not spread as quickly as it does in Africa, thus making it even easier to track and control.



One of the factors in the slow spread of Ebola in comparison to the spread of it in African countries has to do with the fruit bats that dwell in those countries. In West Africa, the native fruit bats are a major factor in spreading the virus, as people do not have protection against the bats, and they are able to fly freely, spreading illness as they go. The fruit bat of the West African region is a natural host of the virus, and the bats spread it through their dead bodies. People in the United States do not have rainforests with bats, and humans do not generally come in contact with dead and diseased animals, so the disease cannot make its way through the country as easily as it has been able to in others.

It is evident that Ebola is a major problem in the world right now, but it is highly concentrated in West Africa. While Americans should do everything they can to help out overseas, the virus is not enough of a problem to cause people to be uncomfortable in their own homes.

Thanksgiving tradition marred by early history of violence

Not all cultures, families thankful due to lesser-known negative origins of holiday

BY KATIE MAHER
Business Manager

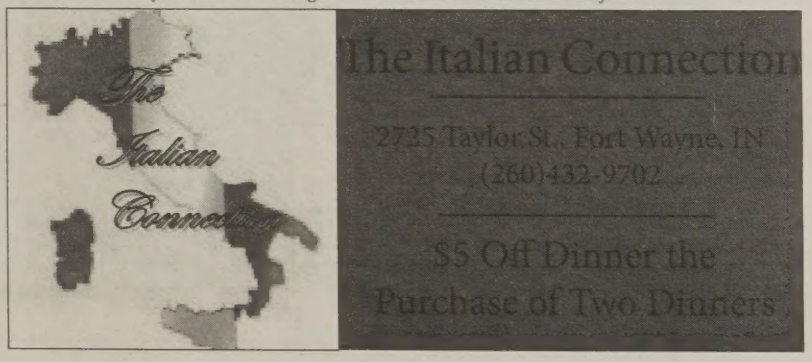
Regardless of the holidays, there are people who are less than thankful for Thanksgiving. There is a broad spectrum of reasons to why several people choose to not celebrate the national holiday, varying between bad family relations, mass turkey genocide, and the sugarcoating of the history of the holiday. A holiday that is usually synonymous with food and family takes on a completely different meaning when its background is investigated; it becomes a celebration of a huge gaping misconception in American history.

> **"Although the idea to be grateful for loved ones... is extremely nice, it would be more respectful to make changes to the holiday in order to not absent-mindedly celebrate what is regarded as a day of mourning to others."**

Thanksgiving is observed in an extremely Eurocentric view, often not mentioning the price Native Americans paid in the events leading up to the declaration of the national holiday in 1863 by Abraham Lincoln. Elementary schools present to kids a celebration with happy pilgrims sharing a turkey with mutually happy Native Americans, and completely ignore how the interaction between the two groups led to the eradication of millions of people. In the past century, The United American Indians of New England recognized Thanksgiving as their National Day of Mourning in 1970 in hopes that more Americans will become aware of the damage done to their people after the fest.

The Mantaka American Indian Council explains the factual origins of the phrase "A Day of Thanksgiving" on their organization's website, which truly deems the history of the holiday as nothing to be thankful for. After a widespread introduction of smallpox to the Pequot people and enslavement of young men shipped to England, 700 Pequot men, women and children gathered in what is now Groton, Connecticut, for their annual Green Corn Celebration. Dutch mercenaries surrounded the festival and clubbed the 700 Pequot Tribe members to death. The governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony considered the extermination of the men, women and children a grand feat, and declared the incident "A Day of Thanksgiving." So the actual name of the day "Thanksgiving" is derived from a violent massacre, and not the single time the Wampanoags and pilgrims feasted to celebrate a short-lived peace treaty.

Even with awareness of the true history of the holiday, a large sum of Americans observe Thanksgiving by the literal meaning of the name, "to be thankful". Although the idea to be grateful for loved ones and full meals is extremely nice, it would be more respectful to make changes to the holiday in order to not absent-mindedly celebrate what is regarded as a day of mourning to others. A celebration of family can take place on a different day of the 365 days of the year. The day should be given a different name, which roots are not a result of a massacre, and children especially should not be taught a false history. When children in classrooms are taught to "treat others how they would like to be treated," the number of around 5.2 million Native Americans should be taken into account: the people who might not appreciate the fabricated meaning and ignored history behind a national holiday.

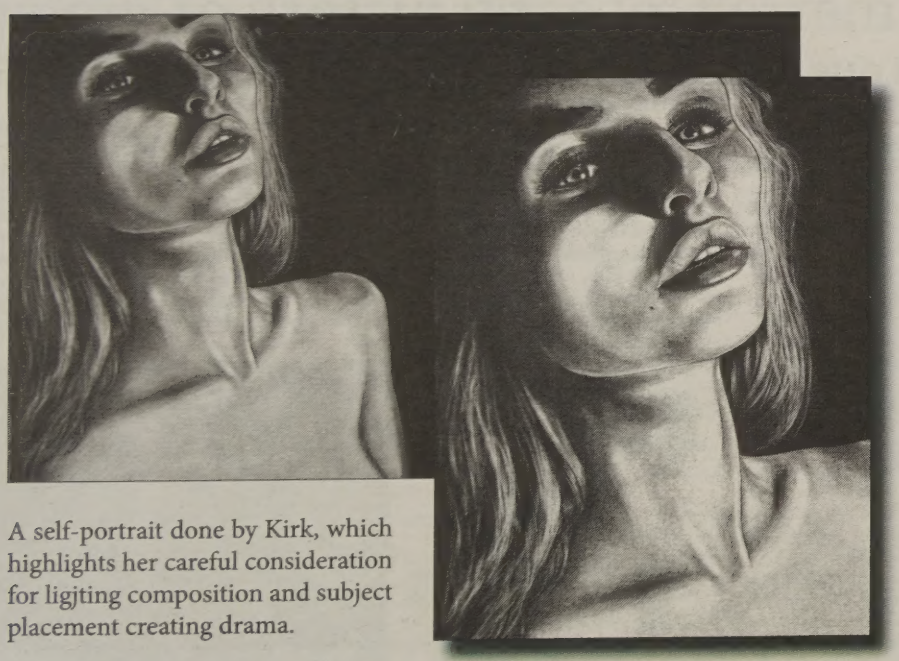


strokes of an artist

"Creativity takes *courage.*"

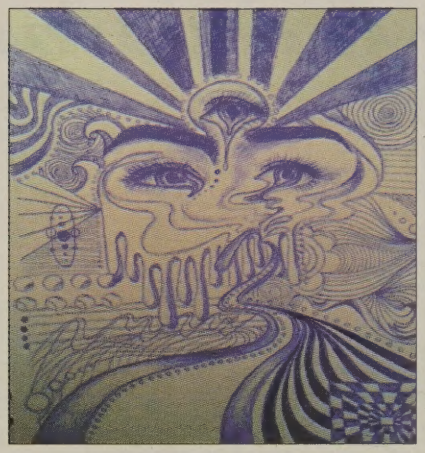
-Henri Matisse

With over 30 visual arts classes offerred at Homestead, those who have artistic inclinations have every opportunity to show their peers and the entire community their hard work and dedication to the arts. Featured on this page is Scolastic Award-winning senior Hannah Kirk, but everyone has the capacity for creativity.

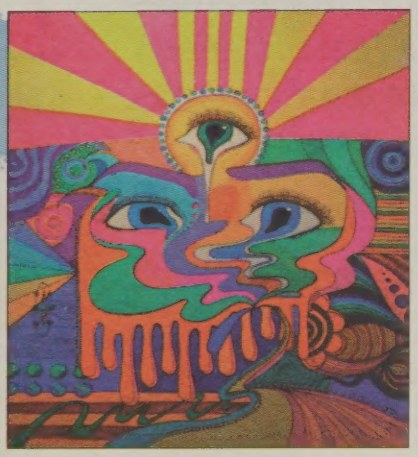


A self-portrait done by Kirk, which highlights her careful consideration for ligjting composition and subject placement creating drama.

PHOTOS BY MEGAN BUTLER



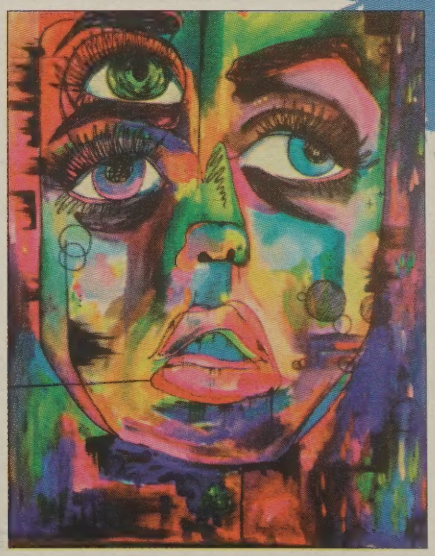
Kirk is known for her realistic drawings of people and her contrastingly abstract paintings. Her style has been alluded to since she was two. "I drew a lot of people," Kirk said, "and they would be abstract which is interesting since that is still the style I'm most attracted to now." However, Kirk now finds herself painting more and more, never truly leaving her hyperrealistic drawings, but dabbling into the curious concept of color. "I like the detail and precision of drawing in pencil," Kirk said, "but I also love painting because it gives me a lot of freedom to just go with what I'm feeling and (the freedom) to play around with colors."



"I don't know where a lot of my ideas come from...

"They just kind of hit me."

-Hannah Kirk (12)



School makes rules for a reason, needs more creative ones

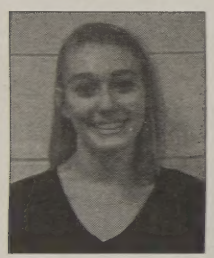
While administration creates new rules for the good of the students, the students are not taking these new regulations well. In the midst of pajama pant debates and lunch portion controversies, there are rules that should be drafted and sent to the school board that benefit students.

First and foremost, there should be no fire drills when it is snowing. I know a school fire will not discriminate when it comes to weather, but students feel the need to wear a winter coat, gloves and two pairs of socks around school every day because they never know when they're going to have to spend three minutes outside in the freezing cold.

Instead of detention (which is inefficient because all students have to do is sit in the cafeteria for a set amount of time), students with punishments should be required to perform a high-difficulty P90X workout.

Stop signs should be installed at hallway intersections, and the halls should be set up like highways with separate lanes. Students should use hand signals (which can be easily learned on the Internet) to signify abrupt stops or turns. This would make travel from one end of the building to another much quicker and more efficient.

JESS SAYIN'



BY JESSICA TEBBEN
Life Editor

Students should be allowed to wear comfortable rubber shoes if and only if these shoes are authentic Croc band shoes. The crocodile that symbolizes the brand must be visible on all rubber shoes. If a student chooses to wear such footwear, it might as well be of a designer brand.

Rather than on the back, book bags should be worn on the chest of students. Not only does this create a form of protection from people running into each other (which should not be a problem if hallway lanes and stop signs are installed), but it makes school supplies easier to retrieve in a pinch.

Students should be sprayed with water guns if they fall asleep in class. If they are not irritated enough already (because they are tired enough to fall asleep during class, and with exhaustion comes irritability), a water gun will make them fume.

What I'm trying to say is the rules some students think are outrageous really aren't that bad. Rules are there for a reason, and even some parts of mine make sense. Although they don't always accomplish what they want with positive feedback, administrators implement all rules with good intentions. Not all of them are agreeable, but at least an attempt is being made.

Dressing up for the Occasion

PHOTO BY BRENNA SCHMIDT

The charity-based event organized by Samantha Stoiche (12) offered 266 dresses to its customers for formal and semi-formal dances.

BY KELSEY HERBER
Life Writer

Dresses are a commodity almost all women need at some point in their lives, especially for momentous occasions such as prom and semi-formal. Unfortunately, some girls cannot afford the expensive prices at which many stores sell dresses.

Sometimes entire school dances, weddings and parties are missed because of the lack of affordable attire.

"I didn't buy semi or prom dresses, but I still have dresses left over from middle school dances, and even those were expensive," Mariah Brown (11) said.

> **"We have about 100 dresses (as of Nov. 13). My personal goal is 400 (dollars) because at about $15 apiece, that could add up to $6,000, which is enough to build a well."**
> **Samantha Stoiche (12)**

Luckily, Samantha Stoiche (12) has come up with a solution. Stoiche recently noticed the growing demand for dresses as high school semi-formals draw near, so she created an organization through which everyone wins.

As a project, dubbed Dressed Up Well, Stoiche decided to start taking donations of both short dresses and floor-length formal gowns and resell them for a small fraction of the original store price.

For $15, customers can purchase a short dress and for $25, a gown.

"I did buy a semi dress last year, and I went prom dress shopping," Claire Costello (10) said. "I understand how hard it is to find a dress for (a cheap price) because semi and prom dresses are very expensive."

Bins are available at Done Rite Dry Cleaners at 6326 Covington Road next to Mocha Lounge and Above and Beyond Community Management at 507 Airport North Office Park to drop off donations.

However, being able to buy an inexpensive dress is not the best part. Stoiche plans to send all proceeds from the dress sale to Let Them LOL, a charity that is helping to end the water crisis in Sierra Leone, Africa by creating wells for those without clean drinking water.

The founders of Let Them LOL have heard about Stoiche's campaign and are helping out by taking dress donations in Buffalo, NY.

"We have about 100 dresses (as of Nov. 13)," Stoiche said. "My personal goal is 400 (dollars) because at about $15 apiece, that could add up to $6,000, which is enough to build a well."

The only date the dresses will be sold is Nov. 22 from 7-11 a.m. at 5610 Lahmeyer Road. Dresses can be dropped off at any location until the sale.

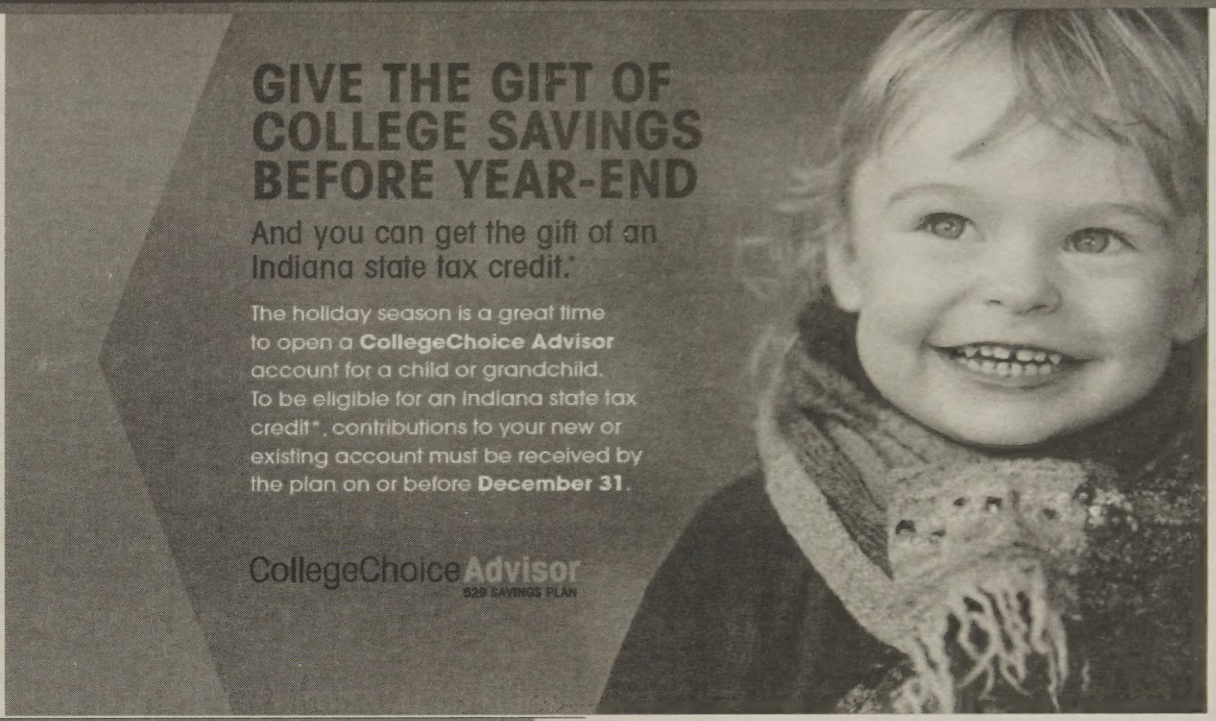
"Honestly, all the money we get is going toward clean drinking water, so I think 100 dresses is pretty successful," Stoiche said. "Also, there are a lot of girls I know that still plan on bringing in their dresses."

Along with bringing in dresses to help raise money, volunteers are also needed to help set up on Nov. 21, the morning before the sale, as well as Nov. 22, during the actual sale itself.

According to Dressed Up Well's Facebook page, "one of the benefits to volunteering time at this event is getting first pick on all dress, and of course the satisfaction of helping out a worthy cause."

Stoiche's project is an ingenious way to help two causes and unclutter an overflowing closet. She invites everyone to join in her effort.

"The cheaply-priced dresses are so great for girls who can't afford a brand-new dress," Costello said. "Plus, it's great that it helps build wells at the same time."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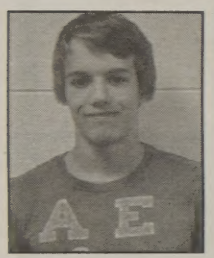


BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Sports Editor

The grudge matches involving sports rivalries are something people wait on every year; the game that typically defines a season and can go down in memory, good or bad. Something is inherently special about these types of games, be it the history of the game and the freshly torn wounds of the last game, or the magical atmosphere created by the desire to gloat about a new win.

Soccer rivalries are my personal favorite as there is almost always some heated exchange or other controversy that fuels the fire of the players' ambition and the fans' spirited support. High school rivalries are not as common, but when they come, they are surrounded by history and hatred, such as Homestead and Canterbury. For the past decade or two, both schools have had highly prestigious athletic programs that have attained success and are consistently amongst the best in the greater Fort Wayne area, introducing a battle for the prominent title of best in the city.

As a player on the field this year, both of the Canterbury games were electric, pride and season hanging on the line in intense matchups. I didn't want to stop running as I couldn't bear the thought of not winning, and the record turnout for the student section fueled the excitement. Losing 3-1 that first game was tough, the complete effort and heart put in returning disappointment, pain and exhaustion.

In the second game, both teams fought for the regional title and the prospect of forging on towards the state title, introducing a nervous tension that brought apprehension, but even more excitement. Sam Barron (12) scoring the winning header was crazy and unbelievable, but the time passing as our team held on to the narrow 1-0 lead felt painfully slow as Canterbury's attack continued in waves; however, we finally made it. Tensions with our rivals brought about yelling and fouling from both sides and the post-match Twitter controversy added more drama for the rivalry next year.

Professional soccer rivalries get even better, with fan bases of several tens of thousands adding even more exhilaration. The Major League Soccer (MLS) game between the Portland Timbers and Seattle Sounders is a classic every time, with the closely located teams determined to take control of the regional rivalry.

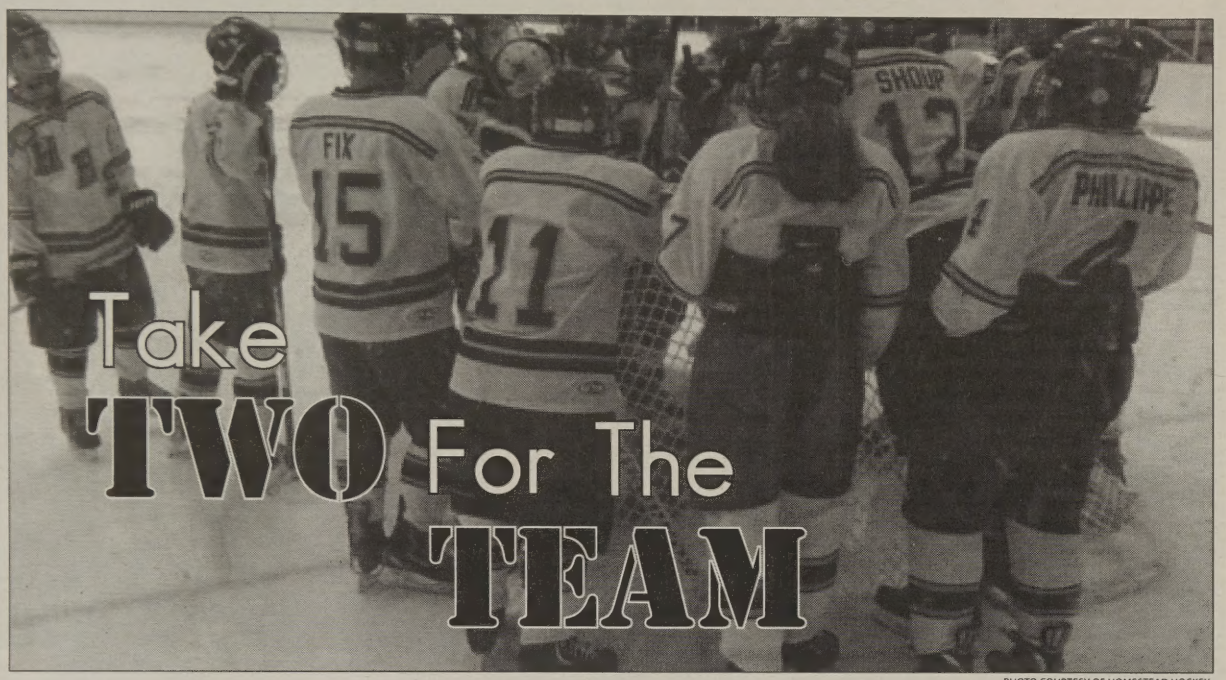


PHOTO COURTESY OF HOMESTEAD HOCKEY

The school's varsity hockey team huddles during a game, including players Tyler Fix (12), Jared Phillippe (12) and Montana Shoup (11).

New coach, goalie bring optimistic philosophy to hockey team

BY COLBY SHOUP
Multimedia Manager

Starting their season on Sept. 27 with a 4 -2 win against the Summit City Panthers, the Spartan hockey team is full of new blood this year, both on and off the ice. This is not just because of the younger freshmen and sophomores on the team, but also because of the addition of two new key people: Kobi Peters, head coach and Adam Conkling (11), goalie.

Both hailing from semi-pro level hockey, the two have been instrumental in helping develop the new team's strong bond and unique focus on creating a sense of personal victory for each player.

"I plan on making them as developed as possible, first through basics, and eventually giving them a little bit of strategy just to give them an overall experience of what hockey really is," Peters said. "I want to communicate to them what I learned in my experiences."

Having started playing hockey at the age of seven after being exposed to the sport by his brother, Peters brings to the team 23 years of experience. In those 23 years, Peters witnessed the world of hockey on all levels, from local youth hockey in Fort Wayne, to highly competitive junior hockey in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada and even some experience working with professional players and coaches from the National Hockey League.

Also boasting quite the resumè, Conkling joined Homestead's roster late this year after the Fort Wayne Federals (a distinguished junior hockey team for 17-21 year olds) folded. Although high school hockey is considered to be below junior hockey in skill level, Conkling was still excited to be playing for his high school for the first time in his career.

"Playing for Homestead isn't ideal compared to the team I played for last year, but it's still great to actually be able to play a team sport with my friends from school," Conkling said.

Also playing on Indiana Jr Ice (a high school all-star team which plays teams from all across the country) for the last two years, Conkling has a reputation amongst his teammates as one of the most experienced and skilled players on the ice, but despite this reputation, Conkling remains humble and dedicated to helping his fellow players become the best they can be. One of these fellow players is Cody Nice (10), center, who had nothing but fond things to say about the goaltender.

"Adam can be very demanding on the ice, but in the best way possible," Nice said, "He tells people what they need to do and they do it, and all the while he just brings great goaltending to the team."

Together, along with the team's captains and upperclassmen, Conkling and Peters are helping usher in a brand new generation of hockey players using a gentle mentality and the optimistic belief that anyone can pick up a stick, learn the game, and eventually become a truly great athlete.

"Hockey is a great sport that anyone can play with hard work," Conkling said, "That's what I try to tell the other goalies on the team when they get frustrated or have trouble learning something."

This philosophy is part of why Conkling is the perfect representation of Peters' new, all-inclusive ideas which have brought radical changes to the program. Peters also believes that anyone should be able play hockey and is very appreciative of Conkling helping to spread this ideal.

"When the others need help with something, he gets right out there and makes the team better by being a leader and explaining how to improve, so he's really invaluable in that sense," Peters said.

As the team looks forward into the future, the new blood seems to be extremely beneficial to not just the hockey program, but also to the players, because to Peters and Conkling, hockey has never been about just the game, but about the people who play it.

"I think Kobi's new strategy and focus on the basics will help us," Nice said, "It may not be popular right now, but it will definitely make us better in the long run."

New head swim coach after 17-year coach resigned

School, SWAC swim team coach Chad Englehart succeeded by passionate Bobby Mattin

BY AWBREI VACHON
Writer

As fall sports come to an end, winter sports are getting their season's starts; but this year, the swim team in particular is going through a bit of a change. Chad Englehart, the team's head coach for 17 years, resigned last year, opening up the position for Bobby Mattin to replace him as head coach.

For the boys and girls who have swam with Englehart as both a Spartans' coach and the SWAC club swim team coach for most of their swimming experience, getting a new coach has been a difficult transition.

"I really liked (Englehart)," Sarah Carter (10) said. "He was definitely one of my favorite coaches, and I think it was really hard on most of us when he was leaving, so that definitely impacted our team and brought our spirits down a little bit"

The team was unaware of Englehart's plan to resign until every member received an email with a brief explanation of his plans.

"He sat us down one day after a practice and he was talking about his plans and the plans for SWAC, but it was very vague," Carter said. "Then we got an email (the next) night saying that (Englehart) was no longer a coach for us. He wasn't allowed to talk to us, we weren't allowed to ask questions, no one was allowed to tell us anything. It was very abrupt."

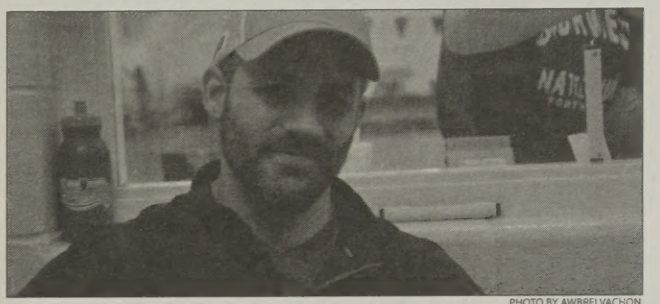
Englehart will be playing a part in the coaching staff at a facility called Phillips 66 Splash Club in Bartlesville, Okla., leaving his responsibilities as a head coach here to Mattin, as well as Jill Eakright, diving coach, Matt Ranochak, volunteer assistant coach and Taylor Grimm, assistant coach.

Though the team has undergone some difficulties adjusting to change thus far, including how the conditioning season was also interrupted due to the Summit pool being under construction during the summer, the swimmers are still looking forward to the upcoming season.

"I'm looking forward to just (enjoying) my senior year, spending time with the team, working hard (and) just carrying on all of the traditions we've had," Kurt Gutwein said. "I think it'll go pretty well."

As far as plans for the new season go, Mattin hopes to continue the school's traditions as well as incorporate methods and tactics he has picked up throughout his coaching experience over the years.

"I was lucky to have some really strong mentors, and I've learned from some of the better minds in the sport," Mattin said. "The biggest thing that I've taken from all (my) coaching positions is that fundamentals really matter more than anything else. When you work on the basics, you become an expert at them. We're excited for the dividend that (it will) pay later on in the season."



New swim and dive coach, Bobby Mattin, reclines in his office. Mattin has much experience in coaching and will head both the the school's swim team and SWAC.

PHOTO BY AWBREI VACHON

Mattin has had coaching experience in different states, universities and swim clubs, and he admits that change is hard, but beneficial.

"It's always a long process, but it's a fun process," Mattin said. "It takes time to develop trust, (like) the athletes developing trust in me (and) me developing trust in the athletes to take care of business when we need to take care of business."

Mattin is excited for what lies ahead in the upcoming swim season, knowing what goals he wants to accomplish and how to achieve them.

"The athletes that we have are passionate about high school swimming, which means I'm passionate about high school swimming," Mattin said. "We really focus on each individual's goals. If you take care of those individual goals, then we achieve team success."

Despite the challenges the transition will produce, Mattin looks forward to being a part of both the school's swim team and SWAC, and he is ready for the task.

"We're trying to represent the school and the team the same way it has in the last 20 years, so it's a big responsibility, but we're excited about it," Mattin said.

Boys varsity basketball anticipates a successful season

Seniors Dana Batt, Caleb Swanigan, Jordan Geist and others to push team to semi-state

BY KYLIE POLING
Opinion Editor

The girls basketball team has already played two games, but the boys basketball team officially tipped off its season against Muncie Central High School on Nov. 22 in a scrimmage game, defeating the Bearcats, 89 to 62. This game bodes well for the Spartans, pegged as the number one team in wwww' 2014-15 Indiana Boys Basketball Fab 5 presented by the Army National Guard.

The boys varsity team will face its first conference game against Carroll on Dec. 19, so Chris Johnson, head coach, will have less than a month of playing to prepare the boys for their Northeast Hoosier Conference opponents. By that time, Jordan Geist (12), guard, will play as a Spartan after transferring from Penn High School in Mishawaka.

Another key player for this season will be Mr. Basketball candidate Caleb Swanigan (12). His time on the court is regularly being watched by college scouts from Division I schools all around the country, including University of Connecticut, University of Kentucky, Indiana University, Purdue University, University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

Dana Batt (12) is another crucial element to the team's dynamic, averaging nine points and five rebounds per game last season. In preparing for this season, Justin Kenny of The News-Sentinel reported Batt's hope to "add an additional 10-15 pounds before his senior season" in an adidas Invitational Profile published on news-sentinel.com. Batt committed to Colgate University in September.

Other players who will be crucial to the team's success include Teddy Ray (12), Ben Skowronek (11) and Tahj Curry (11), who averaged nine points per game last season. Another transfer to the team, JJ Foster (10), averaged 12 points and five assists for Bishop Luers last season and will also contribute to the Spartans' success for the 2014-15 season.

The team ended last season with 20 wins and eight losses, a school record, and advanced to the semi-state game, which is the furthest any Spartan boys basketball team has ever gone in the IHSAA state competition.

With high expectations for this year's team, home games are expected to sell out this year, so Joe Updegrove, athletic director, advises staff and fans to arrive to the games early in order to ensure there are seats available; however, the student section will be expanded for this season, allowing the accommodation of more students to cheer on the Spartans on their quest for state.

"Hopefully we're taking the best 12 players at Homestead to represent the school and the community at a high level." Johnson said.

Basketball Boys Varsity Schedule (2014-15)

Wednesday 11/26 vs. Huntington North at Home **11 AM**
Friday 11/28-11/29 Bluegrass Invitational in Lexington, KY **5AM, TBA**
Friday 12/5 vs. Warsaw High School at Home **7:45 PM**
Saturday 12/6 Forum Credit Union Tip Off Classic at Southport High School **3 PM**
Tuesday 12/9 vs. South Side at Home **7:30 PM**

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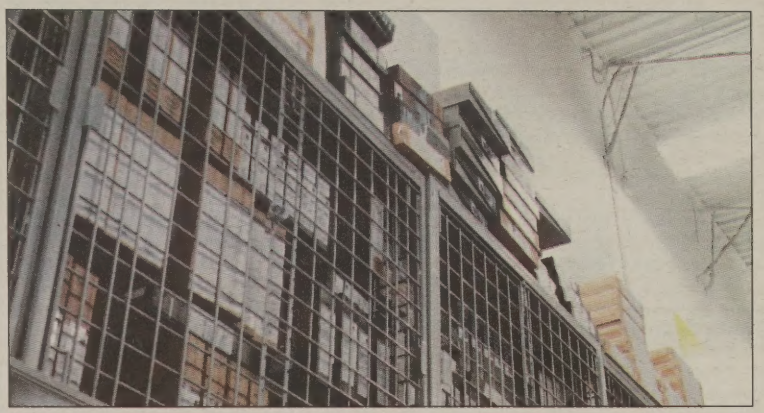
BACK to BLACK

Diverse Black Friday experiences both discourage shoppers, reflect generosity of holiday season

PHOTOS BY ALLIE NELSON



Left: P.J. Bojrab (12), Best Buy employee, assists a customer with a computer purchase, which he will also be required to do on Black Friday. "Since I am new I have to study up on the sales that we are having and make sure that I can perform the duties that I am assigned to do," Bojrab said. Above: Best Buy houses Black Friday inventory on upper shelves.

BY ALLIE NELSON
Executive Editor

For businesses, Black Friday is just what it is named for. Their record-breaking sales bring them "out of the red" and "into the black;" No longer are their economic losses significant. Their profits from this day and night are their life vests.

For consumers, the name of the day is also relevant. Now that stores are opening at the very start of the Friday after Thanksgiving, and some the night of the holiday, it is dark. To most, this blackness signals the time for sleep. For Black Friday shoppers, the nocturnal schedule is what allows them to do Christmas shopping on a budget, no matter what happens.

> **"Have a plan of action and know which stores you want to go to first and know what time you want to get there. Bring a coat if you have to wait outside. Be warm.**
> **Amanda Patterson, Black Friday shopper**

Isaiah Anderson (11) is an annual Black Friday shopper. Unaccustomed to the aggressiveness of those preparing to spread some holiday cheer, his experience last year at a Target in Indianapolis is one he will not forget.

"We were standing in line waiting to get checked out and my grandma was standing there with a t-shirt," Anderson said. "It was the last one on the rack and the lady behind us (...) took it, and we turned around and looked at her and she said she didn't take it from us, even though she did. And she kept denying it the whole time. So my grandma took it back from her and then she took it off her shoulder again and just left the store. It was surprising."

Anderson, however, is not alone in being victimized by other Black Friday shoppers. Chase Stoker (11), too, experienced the consequences of being present in the large crowds.

"My mom wanted to go to Kohl's to get some cheap appliances, and I was just there to keep her company," Stoker said. "I kind of wandered off on my own and they were letting people off in waves and I was the first wave and then the second wave hit and a storm of women stormed through the clothes aisle and knocked me into the clothes racks and then two more proceeded to stomp over me."

Despite the long lines and selfish behavior, those who deem Black Friday to be worthy of their time have strategies to get them through the long day.

"I look at the Black Friday ads and figure out what store or which stores have the most important item, best sale item for me," Amanda Patterson, English teacher, said. "(Some advice I would give is to) have a plan of action and know which stores you want to go to first and know what time you want to get there. Bring a coat if you have to wait outside. Be warm."

Not only do those waiting in the winding checkout lines endure stress on Black Friday, but the cashiers and workers during this time work harder than ever to make it possible. Matt Clay (12), Starbucks barista, will be working an eight-hour shift at the Glenbrook branch so that participants can caffeinate and stay motivated. As a Black Friday employee veteran, he knows what to expect. His words of advice for shoppers: "Make sure to stay calm and not too crazy, and also tip your barista."

Michael's employee Celeste Fendt (11) is new to the task and has thought about how to get ready for the big day.

"(I will) probably talk to my managers, find out what I should do with coupon exceptions and stuff like that, and (find out) how to deal with rude people," Fendt said. "I have to prepare myself for that."

Despite the struggles associated with Black Friday, if there were no benefits besides discounts, stores would be empty.

"Just being in line, you kind of make friends with those people standing by you," Patterson said.

The crowds offer motivation to shoppers. They are not the only ones determined to score extreme bargains. Even though people can be aggressive on Black Friday, sometimes people have changes of heart, and maybe can even be reminded what gift giving is all about.

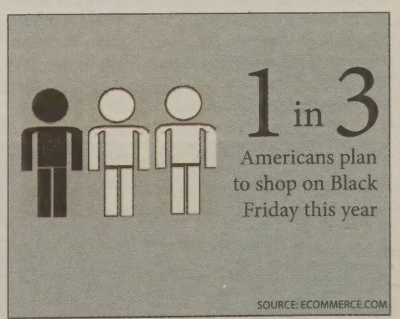
"(After the woman took the t-shirt again) I kind of just stood there because it was really awkward, but she ended up giving us the shirt back after she paid for it, which was pretty nice," Anderson said.

Black Friday shopping is a risk many are willing to take. All in all, the decision to participate is personal and not always easy.

"I think it's really unnecessary because people take it to the extreme," Anderson said. "I guess it depends on how you see it and what you're getting at the end of it."

Black Friday Shopping Essentials

- a warm coat
- a book (something to do in line)
- a friend (someone to hold your place in line)
- blankets (if you're going to be outside)
- a snack



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Winter weather leads to eLearning days, cancellations

Administration follows guidelines to determine whether winter conditions are safe enough for travel

BY TESSA VIRGILIO
News Editor

Students have come to accept that when school is called off due to winter weather, classes are still in session. Through the development of eLearning, the online learning program the school has recently implemented, teachers, administrators and students are more likely to start their summers on May 27 rather than in the middle of June.

Popular belief warrants that snow makeup days are called for due to the heavy snowfall and the freezing temperatures. While these variables are always under consideration, a closer examination of the administration's motives for canceling school reveals a more dynamic reasoning for closures and delays.

"We're going to really look at (closings and delays) as an administrative team at how we are (doing) at the different levels: elementary, middle and high (school)," Park Ginder, principal, said. "If we feel like we're losing momentum in the classrooms, say, we miss three consecutive days, we may say on the third day, 'Today is a snow day, straight up, and we're going to make this us up on (a built-in snow makeup day).'"

An enormous topic of consideration when deciding to close or delay school is student safety. With a noticeable portion of the high school being new drivers, the administration watches for weather conditions that could endanger these drivers and their families. There is also the concern of students who have to wait outside for the bus.

"I think that (the -20 degree wind chill) is kind of an unsure method," Alexis Toliver (10) said. "I think that if they deem it is cold enough (without a specific number) they should cancel school."

A delay is almost always a prerequisite for a cancellation of a school day. Students relish in having two extra hours to catch up on sleep, but administrators during this time are bustling to make the verdict of whether to close school. A delay is imposed when administrators reason the weather may improve within a period of time. It also allows time for work traffic to pass, the county to clear roads and for the school to salt parking lots.

"(A delay) allows the sun to come out which then should help with driving conditions, at least from a visibility standpoint," Ginder said. "It also gives you a chance to make a decision as conditions improve or potentially worsen."

Sometimes, cancellations will be made the night before because of the projected wind chill or possible snowfall to occur. If not made the night prior, the deadline for making the decision is between 5:30 and 6 a.m., before the buses roll.

"One of the worst case scenarios is when a storm is approaching and it appears like it is going to hit somewhere between 5:30 and 6 a.m.," Philip Downs, Superintendent, said in a video on www.sacs.k12.in.us.

A -20 degree wind chill is a starting point for conversation of canceling school. People from SACS and surrounding districts are out driving roads by 4:30 a.m. to assess the conditions. If there is a delay, the deadline for deciding on a cancellation is 7:30 a.m.

> **"We' re going to really look at (closings and delays) as an administrative team at how we are (doing) at the different levels: elementary, middle and high (school)."**
>
> **-Park Ginder, principal**

The curative eLearning days are employed to keep the school on schedule for the pre-arranged end of the school year and to keep AP, ECA and other testing in place. While beneficial, they are regarded by many with various concerns; for administrators like Ginder and Downs, their unease stems from the concern that there may be a week in which inclement weather proceeds over more than one or two days. This would supply a need for successive eLearning days, which Ginder notes is not an ideal way to "maintain educational momentum."

"A careful viewing of our school calendar will show that school makeup days are still on there," Downs said in the video. "The reason for that is I reserve the right to not use eLearning if we have a big enough snowstorm to where we're out too many days. If I feel that (educational) momentum is beginning to slip, we will make up those days."

In the case of consecutive school closures, it is likely the school will use built-in school makeup days to account for the days after the first or second cancelled day.

Currently, there is no behavior consequence for not completing eLearning day assignments on an unscheduled snow day. Ginder notes, however, there is a consequence to the student's grade in a class, and there may be a behavior discipline in the future. On the previous scheduled Flex Days, students were required to come to school on the next Flex Day if assignments were not completed.

"Once in a while, I'm okay with (it) if weather warrants a cancellation," Diane Partee, math teacher, said. "A third day in a row is tough because you haven't had that verbal interaction with students."

Robotics team prepares for upcoming competitions

Team plans, programs and builds robots for competitions starting in February

BY MICHAL SPANJER
Writer

The school's robotics team, Olympus Robotics Team 4982, meets every weekday until 6 p.m. in the engineering section of the school and on weekends to plan, program and build robots for their two qualifying competitions in late February.

The team has to plan out its robot before it begins to build. The theme for robotics this year is recycle rush, so the robot will need to be able to stack recycling bins and push aside "litter," or pool noodles. When the team brainstormed how the robot would look and move, it decided to incorporate a fork lift.

"We spend roughly the first week prototyping," Dakota Alverson (11), co-captain of the robotics team, said. "In the past and this year we need to get some parts specially made."

During the time spent building and programming, the members collaborate in small groups to get the work done.

"Everybody will just go into separate rooms and groups and will start programming, and it's just really interesting to watch because you see how it all comes together," Hannah Parks (9) said.

The competitions next month will determine if the team progresses to the state level competitions. At the competitions, teams work in groups with three other teams from different schools.

Last year, the first year the school had a robotics team, the team won the Rookie All Star award and made it to the World Championship competition. This year, there are more people on the team who have experience and it was easier to find sponsors because a foundation had already been built.

"Having had a season under our belt, we're a little more experienced, so now we're able to go beyond all the things we were limited to last year," Puneeth Meruva (12), captain of the robotics team, said.

Before the team finds out the theme for the year and begins to plan the robot, they meet to work on smaller projects and show new members how to program and build robots. During the first semester of this school year, the team started designing a t-shirt launching robot. This helped the team prepare to create the more complex robot it is building for the competitions.

Alverson and Meruva both feel that the robotics team benefits students by promoting STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) education. Students are taught about engineering through project based learning while being motivated by their peers.

"I think the greatest thing I enjoy (about the robotics team) is what it's taught me and how many doors it's opened for me," Meruva said.

The team helps members network with companies and other people involved in engineering. This can give students looking into STEM careers an advantage and many members agree that the robotics team teaches them skills that will be useful in the future. The team can also give students technical knowledge through experience in workshops and internship opportunities.

Alverson also believes programs such as Project Lead The Way and the robotics team can help more female students become interested in STEM careers because, as it stands now, women only make up 17 percent of the STEM workforce. Alverson thinks being a woman with a STEM career can be a "unique and some

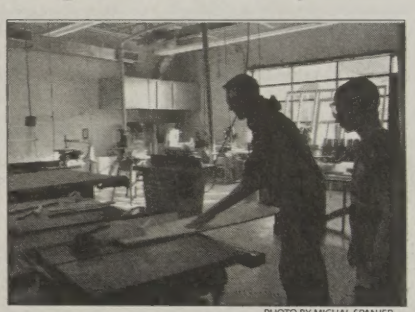


PHOTO BY MICHAL SPANJER

Robotics team members work on their project.

times disadvantaged position.

On another note, Alverson mentioned the friends she has made through the robotics team. Since the team works together for 20 or more hours a week, many of the members become friends and enjoy the time they spend together, as they acquire technical, teamwork and leadership skills.

2015 Horoscopes

By Katie Maher

For Entertainment Purposes Only

Capricorn

December 22-January 20

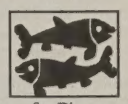
2015 will be a break from emotional pressure for Capricorn. Your ruling planet, Saturn, is leaving the sign of Scorpio for the first time in two years, and although you were able to explore your deeper emotions at the time, the suffering was unbearable. But Pluto will now allow you to transform positively! Learn to acknowledge past faults within yourself, and continue to be the best you can be. Jupiter will encourage progress. You will not feel tempted to go back to perilous habits when acknowledging the depth and passions within yourself who make you who you are.

Aquarius

January 21-February 19

Out of all of the signs, this year will finally be time for Aquarius to shine. Saturn may have increase pressure since 2012, but now you will dig into important projects and hobbies outside of work that will ease the pain. The Pluto and Uranus square aspect will make you look at past pains. Luckily, newly formed relationships will warm up the year, and help through that time. Be willing to take risks, and end habits that are not beneficial to you. Intense emotions for others and a growing sense of self will mark 2015.

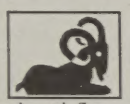
Pisces



February 20-March 20

This year will test the validity of aspirations for Pisces, and as negative as that sounds, you will be lead to activities you love. Jupiter has caused confusion for Pisces with its speed since last summer, but will make sense. You will find opportunities to move on to greater things. Fears are what were holding you back, but you have control to break through those restrictions. Especially in the first half of the year, choices will need to be made on what to commit to in life. Understanding who you are will allow you to blossom in mid-October!

Aries



March 21-April 20

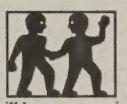
Jupiter, Pluto and Saturn will be prominent influences this year. Saturn, which usually restricts, will allow you to explore future prospects. Follow your intuition during this time, especially with relationships. 2015 will call for you to expect the unexpected. It was nice during the first three months of the year to have someone to lean on, but the benefits of Jupiter will allow strong relationships to blossom, especially in March and June. Late April will be the most difficult time of the year, but ultimately rewarding. It can be a period of evaluation, which can lead to break-up from certain people and activities which are not in the prospects for what an Aries needs. This is the year, Aries, to reconnect with what and who you love.

Taurus

April 21-May 21

The first half of the year will be devoted to family and sorting out your environment, but that does not mean the year is not promising! Relationship wise, a series of Jupiter, Mars and Venus influences will kick start or enhance a love with an activity or person. A lot of positive change is induced in this year whether it is with family, work habits or relationships. In order for the positive change to reach the full effect, stop making the same mistakes. This will force you to acknowledge your fallibilities, which can cause a major confidence blow. The best way to rebuild confidence will be to put the past behind you. Especially during the 3rd decan (12th- 20th of May), evaluate the smaller difficulties in your life, and then inspect the larger problems. This will help you rise above anything holding you back!

Gemini



May 22-June 21

Although always a prospect for fun, this will be a very serious but rewarding year for Gemini. Saturn will have an evaluative effect on all of the signs, and so will Gemini relationships be under the microscope. This will make you ask what is important to you during the early half. As painful as digging into such things sounds, the reflections are ultimately positive! A passion for F.R.I.E.N.D.S. re-runs might resurface during this time. You will desire security during the summer. Learn to enjoy your surroundings. The end of the year will be a quite trivial time for Gemini since you will be forced to confront responsibilities you wish to ignore. Keep in mind that allowing yourself to tackle these indispensable issues will bring out the best rewards.

Cancer

June 22-July 23

Since 2008, anyone born under the sign of Cancer has had an influence from Pluto to shape their ideal of relationships due to several losses of loved ones. This year will put this knowledge into perspective, and to grow along the way with a new sense of maturity. Do not stop trying to improve difficult relationships! All of this personal responsibility will feel turbulent at first, but enforcing your strong sense of humor will restore your morale to a sense of harmony. Learn to express your desires especially between the fifth of June and eighth of October; this will attract opportunities to express your talents in the later of the year.

Leo

July 24-August 23

Two words that should be taken as a sort of mantra for Leo: chill out. The past couple of years brought up tensions in the home for Leos, but this year will help sort out what behaviors to pursue to bring the best for everyone. Jupiter will be in your sign this year, which will bring warmth and let you live life to the fullest; even with the newly formed boundaries place on the self. Boundaries, in this case, are not negative. You have learned what behaviors will amount to good and what will conclude to bad. Limitations are quite unorthodox to a Leo, but they can lead to sincerity in your actions!

Virgo

August 24-September 23

This year will be vital for Virgo, regardless of which decan you were born in. It will be impossible to ignore things that cause long term problems. This includes breaking more alienating Virgo behavior tendencies! By summer, you might feel uneasy due to the change of habits, but just wait until August. Your talents that have been bottled for years will finally come into play, and the later half of 2015 will be one of your most prosperous times yet.

Libra

September 24-October 23

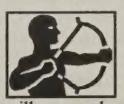
Libra, you will finally be able to breathe this year. The pressure from the square aspect of Uranus and Pluto will diminish, especially with family tensions. Learn to break free from restrictions and be more independent! This may mean breaking old habits. Start to make your own rules. Jupiter has allowed you to look at the future through a positive lens since the summer of 2014, and will now help the positive vision become reality. Your friends will have your back this year, even as you adapt to your newfound independence. From August 11th, put production before attention. Your work during this period will be what gives you recognition.

Scorpio

October 24-November 22

Your artistic outlets will reap recognition this year, allowing you to stand out from the crowd. This year will be a huge sigh of relief for Scorpios. The intensity of Saturn in your sign which has made you reconstruct your personality and dive into past pains will lessen. Put yourself first! You will blossom in your activities when you persist. What you really desire might come into light with access to full awareness of your choices and options. Between the fifth of January and March 13, make some decisions about your living environment. Jupiter will allow you to reconnect with yourself enthusiastically. At the end of November, disappointment will feel prominent if you do not try to do what is best for you.

Sagittarius



November 23-December 21

For Sagittarius, the early part of the year will cause relationships to be turbulent due to the square between Uranus and Pluto. But luckily, the rest of the year will allow several opportunities to smooth out the earlier uncertainty. New doors will open, and all are leading to allowing you to relive good past experiences, and enjoy new ones. Neptune is your guide, and will surely help you rebuild yourself after the harder first few months. Gradually, a positive direction in your life will restore.

FWCS implements a later start time for high schools

School board votes for middle schools to begin school day first, followed by elementary to improve budget

By Colby Shoup
Multimedia Manager

Fort Wayne Community Schools (FWCS) raised eyebrows recently when the district approved a new bus route and scheduling system for the 2015-16 school year. The upcoming changes include cutting bus routes to magnet schools and other various, but significant, budget cuts; however, the most controversial aspect of the proposal by far has been the suggested high school schedule change.

Starting September of this year, the high schools North Side, Snider, Northrup, South Side and Wayne will all start at 9:05 a.m. and end at 4:10 p.m., with elementary schools starting an hour earlier and middle schools starting two hours earlier. This change may be made in order to create three separate bus schedules, which will reduce idle work hours for school bus drivers and would contribute to FWCS saving 2.5 million dollars in their transportation budget.

The district's school board did not vote on the topic until Monday Jan. 26, but even before then parents, teachers and students from all over Fort Wayne were questioning the validity of the changes and asking whether or not the high schools of Southwest Allen County Schools (SACS) should consider taking similar measures.

As is to be expected, many high school students have been ecstatic about the idea of later school start times. There has, however, been quite a lot of backlash against the idea from students as well. These detractors argue that while being able to sleep in later would be ideal, later start times for high schools would ultimately be detrimental to the lives of high school students.

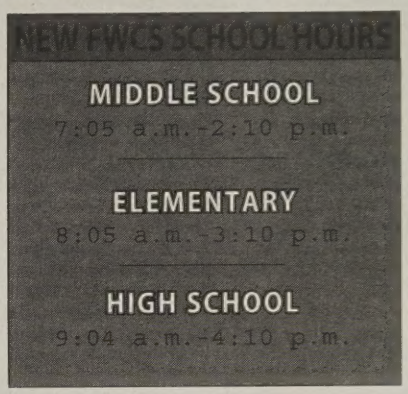
One reason it would be detrimental, argues Gavin Rhinehart (10), is that it would cause extracurricular activities to run until much later, as many activities, especially competitive programs such as marching band and football, spend multiple hours a night practicing.

"A later start time of school will push after school activities later than they already run, which leaves less time for school work.," Rhinehart said.

This is a valid point, but many of these detractors are unaware of the overwhelming amount of medical benefits later school start times provide, as proven by countless studies and surveys taken over the years.

For example, a study conducted in Westchester, Illinois and published in The Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine in December 2008 shows that when high school starts at 7:45, only 35.7 percent of students get their recommended eight hours of sleep, but when the start time is pushed back by just one hour, 50 percent of students get their eight hours of sleep. Additionally, the town of Westchester experienced a 17 percent decrease in teen crash rates while participating in this study.

This is most likely because, according to AAA, drowsy teen driving accounts for approximately 100,000 crashes annually in America and 60 percent of surveyed sleep deprived teens attribute their drowsiness, at least in part, to early school start times. This is especially troubling since teenagers are medically proven to need sleep the most out of any age group.



While it is undeniable that the proposed schedule changes could make extracurricular activities run later, students, like Hallie Nowak (12), have come up with a simple solution for this problem.

"I don't see how (extracurricular activities running later with later start times) is a problem because with a later starting time, you could stay up later or use your extra time in the morning to finish school work," Nowak said.

With the abundance of possible benefits and lack of any real negatives, it's hard to believe that school districts like SACS and FWCS seem to just now be considering changing schedules as an option. If other districts follow FWCS' lead they could potentially save a substantial amount of money in their transportation budget, money that could go to other important projects for schools.

At the very least, the idea of later school start times should be something at least considered by other school districts, as it has the potential to help create healthier, more attentive teenagers and, as a result, better students.

Think SACS should consider something similar? Let us know! Tweet @TheSpartana or email thespartana@gmail.com

eLearning provides a constructive alternative to make up days

Days no longer added to end of school year; instead, day is made up through MyBigCampus

BY ETHAN YDE
Copy Editor

The newest major addition to the SACS schedule are eLearning days, which allow for students and teachers to work from home instead of having snow days added on to the end of the school year. Of course, it is now obvious what they are and what the goal of them is, but there are more benefits than what meets the eye. eLearning days allow more relaxation time at home than ever before, and not all of that time will be spent working on school work.

> **"The majority of students would prefer an eLearning day versus going to school at 7 a.m., so the days are a win-win for everyone."**

Not only do eLearning days help avoid adding days and infringing on summer break, they also give more break days during the school year. Days like Martin Luther King Jr. Day that students were able to enjoy from home, used to be considered snow makeup days. Because there have not been days that snow causes a cancellation of schoolwork, there is no need to place snow makeup days throughout the third semester.

Now that the school allows students to work from home with technology like one to one computing, MyBigCampus communication and Google's mail service, closing days are a breeze. The majority of students would prefer an eLearning day versus going to school at 7 a.m., so the days are a win-win for everyone. ELearning days mean that students have more days off during the school year and less days taken out of the summer. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was a nice break after the first full week of the school year. Having holiday days off from school allows for breaks from the dreaded third semester, which is said to give the biggest work load of the year. Coming up in February, students will be able to have a four day weekend during the weekend of Valentine's Day. On Friday the 13 there is a teacher in-service day, and the following Monday is President's day, a day that students have spent in school in most years past. This would have been a day off if it had not been for the closing the week before.

Clearly, a four day weekend will be much appreciated after symptoms of cabin fever start to show in Southwest Allen students. A break from the tired and gloomy feeling that students get after walking into a cold school at a strange hour will definitely be refreshing. Three and four day weekends allow for a break from the stress and pressure that too much school can bring to students.

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During this time, teachers can be reached via email or MyBigCampus pathways, including messaging or discussion.

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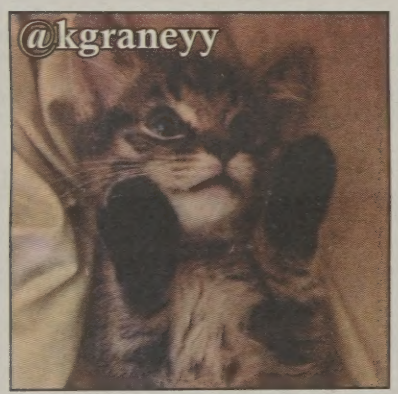
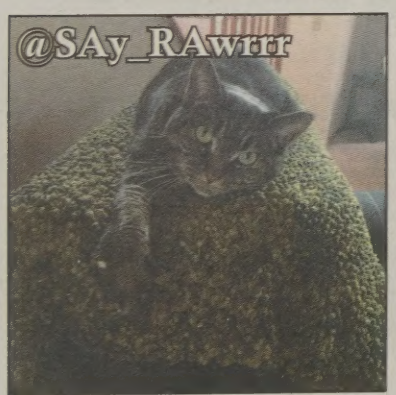
FURRY FRIENDS

The Mission: Collect pictures of Spartans' pets. The Means: Twitter. The End Result: Over 30 submissions of Spartan pets. Katie Maher, Business Manager, tweeted at students to send us pictures of their animals, and it resulted in our timeline being filled with the most adorable, most 'aww'-worhty pets we've ever seen.





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Setting priorities helps students achieve in long run

Students should start assignments they do not want to do first to get them out of the way

JESS SAYIN'

BY JESSICA TEBBEN
Life Editor

When students come home from school, they normally have intentions of doing something productive and beneficial, such as doing homework so they can go to bed early or taking a nap so they can stay up late doing homework. However, intentions are often thwarted by the vast access to social media students have with the touch of a finger. I know about the power of prioritizing, or the lack thereof, from personal experience. I have wasted entire afternoons and evenings on Twitter.

Priorities are important because they can make or break you during times of stress. As we launch ourselves into the new semester, it is imperative to make prioritizing a priority. It sounds ironic, but making sure your have your priorities in line will make your life easier and make you potentially happier.

There are some essential steps to making sure important things are finished first. The formula is based primarily on common sense, but there are temptations when following through, such as things you are happiest doing. Basically, if you do not want to do it, you should do it first.

We all want to come home and put off homework for as long as possible, but we should do our homework first. If we do not want to do it, we probably will not until it is too late at night to function and think correctly.

Social media does not take a ton of brain power, so we should probably save that until later. If you get your homework finished early enough, more than likely you will still have time to like every celebrity photo that pops up on your Instagram feed, check Twitter to see if you are famous yet and then go to sleep. Or you can skip the social media stuff because sleep is really important, but what high school student would ever do that?

In the same way, you would probably rather take a shower every morning so you don't look like you just rose from the dead. However, it is probably more important to eat some food so you don't starve. Eating is a biological need, after all. If you prioritize and eat as soon as you wake up, you can still take a shower. As eating is taking away time to get ready for school, you will be less likely to waste time in the morning doing things you do not actually need to do.

You could also use the priority guidelines to help you save money. You want to go to all those concerts over the summer, but you're also planning on going to college in the near future. Listening to cool, live music is obviously more appealing than spending hours on school work in the same room as someone you barely know. That is why you should probably save for college more than you save for concerts. One concert would be fine, but you cannot go to them all. However, if you devote all your high school savings toward college, you can get a six-figure job and go to all the concerts you want. That one is pretty easy, but it takes a while for your prioritizing to reveal its benefits.

From these examples, it's pretty obvious that priorities are not fun. No concerts? No Twitter? No shower? No thanks! But prioritizing also gives you more resources to do the things you actually want to do.

Priorities are things that no one wants to face, but everyone has to face anyway. You might as well get them over with so you can do the things you actually enjoy. Getting into the habit of prioritizing will be worth it in the long run.

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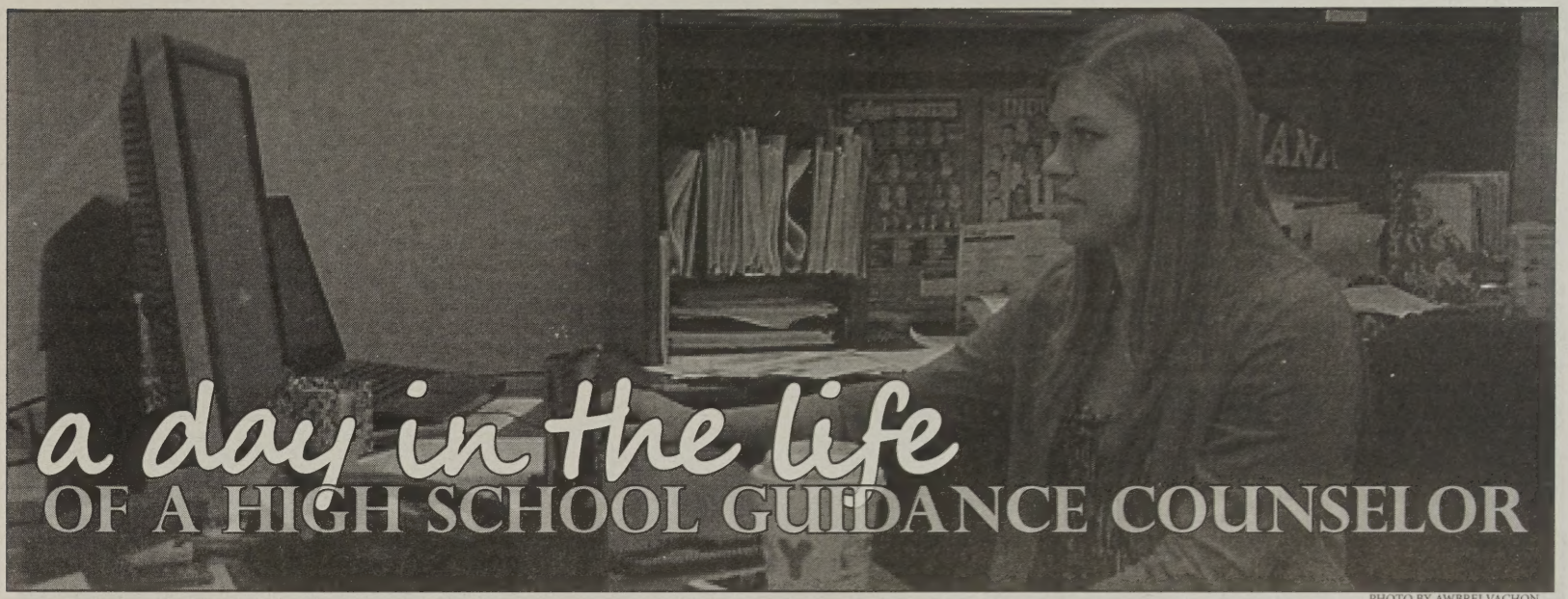


a day in the life OF A HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

PHOTO BY AWBREI VACHON

Alyssa Heggen (above), guidance counselor, works from her office in the ninth grade academy where she sifts through emails and meets with students for academic and personal problems.

BY AWBREI VACHON
Writer

Among all the staff members of a typical high school, one group of individuals tends to go underappreciated: high school guidance counselors. Students do not always acknowledge or even recognize the amount of work counselors put in to keep everything in the school running smoothly.

Between scheduling classes, lunch duty and assuaging all of the pressures and difficulties a student might go through, counselors are busy bees.

"We each have over 300 students assigned to us," Thomas Quigley, guidance counselor, said. "The biggest challenge is to be able to move from one topic to another topic. Every time you turn around it's something different."

In any given day, there are scheduled meetings and appointments counselors have to attend, as well as unexpected events needing to be taken care of almost immediately.

"(As) a counselor, you get to wear a lot of different hats," Alyssa Heggen, ninth grade guidance counselor, said. "You (might) meet with ten students in a day talking about colleges and their grades, (or) your day could totally be blown away with a mini crisis. It could be about personal issues, it could be about academic issues. You never know what you're going to get."

According to Quigley, counseling takes good character. It takes someone who aspires to help students with anything from simple academic standpoints to emotional and personal issues. Interns Cassie Wolfe and Stephanie Lewis, students at IPFW, concur, admitting the reason they both decided to go down the path of school counseling is due to their love to help young people.

"(As) a counselor, you get to wear a lot of different hats... You never know what you're going to get."

-Alyssa Heggen

"I kind of knew that I wanted to do psychology for a while," Lewis said. "I really enjoy working with teenagers especially, but I wanted to have access to all teenagers, not just a select population of teenagers that parents might take them to counseling. So I thought being in a school, would give me a chance to work with as many students as possible."

PHOTO BY AWBREI VACHON

Cassie Wolfe(left) and Stephanie Lewis(right), interns, get experience as counselors.

Both from the west coast, Wolfe and Lewis did not know what to expect from this school district, but are pleased with their decision to do their interning here, admitting they would not prefer to get this integral experience anywhere else.

Wolfe and Lewis are also starting to realize just how busy a counselor's week is.

"The stuff we've been able to experience is just going to benefit us in the long run," Wolfe said. "They give us a lot of responsibility and (we get to) just really (see) what it's like to be a counselor and (be) involved. I'm extremely glad we chose Homestead. It's rewarding although we're not getting paid to do this internship."

With all of chaos controlling a counselor's day, the counselors try to make time for themselves as much as possible, when they are not doing lunch duty of course.

"Once every week every counselor has lunch duty, so we are walking around and monitoring the cafeteria," Heggen said. "The rest of the week, I'll eat with the teachers just whenever I have a moment in the afternoon, (or sometimes) I'll eat lunch in my office while I'm catching up on e-mail. All of the counselors do try to set time for themselves (to) eat and kind of rejuvenate and interact with some adults."

Even though guidance counseling is not a commonly considered occupation, it is a lot of work and the school's counselors deserve much more credit than they are granted. Without them, students would not have organized means to meet their high school and postsecondary goals, among other catastrophes.

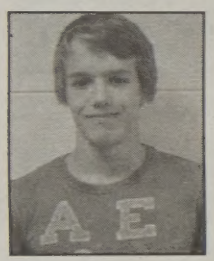
"My problem is, I don't know if I'm ever going to retire. I could've retired two years ago, but I love what I'm doing," Quigley said.

Performance-enhancing drugs need more attention

Several doping cases in professional sports in the past few years have taken high profile, media-fueled paths to controversy, whic have helped begin to combat the unsuspectingly widespread use of performance enhancing drugs, or PEDs. Although there is always debate on whether athletes are justified to use PEDs, it is more beneficial to outline rules across all sports and ensure that there is no chance of drug use to enhance performance.

Baseball scandals have been prevalent and most notably known through the Barry Bonds perjury case. Bonds is currently the leading home-run hitter in Major League Baseball history with 756 home runs, but his accomplishments are now questioned. After allegedly using anabolic steroids provided by his trainer, Bonds declared innocence in a trial in 2003, but in 2006 was accused of perjury, or giving false information during his original trial. Throughout following trials, Bonds appealed the accusations but was kept in a federal prison, and was eventually charged with perjury and obstruction of justice. Bonds' involvement in the scandal damaged his reputation as well as the MLB, who introduced stricter testing for PEDs.

'KOWSKI'S CORNER



BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Sports Editor

Cycling is another major stage that is frequently marred with doping controversies, with cases and convictions occurring yearly. A major scandal involved famed seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, who was heralded as one of the greatest cyclists of the past decade and an anatomical freak of nature. However, in 2011, Armstrong was forced into retirement amongst allegations that he used illicit PEDs, and was banned for life from the sport and stripped of all accomplishments. The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the world governing body of cycling, has also bolstered drug testing in following years. The path taken by UCI to eliminate such cheating is an example for other sports to follow .

PEDs seem engrained as a part of sports culture, but it is time for all sport-governing bodies to begin to impose higher penalties for cheating as well as improved tests to find evidence. Leveling the playing field by ensuring everyone performs to natural abilities may be difficult, but is a necessary change in modern times.

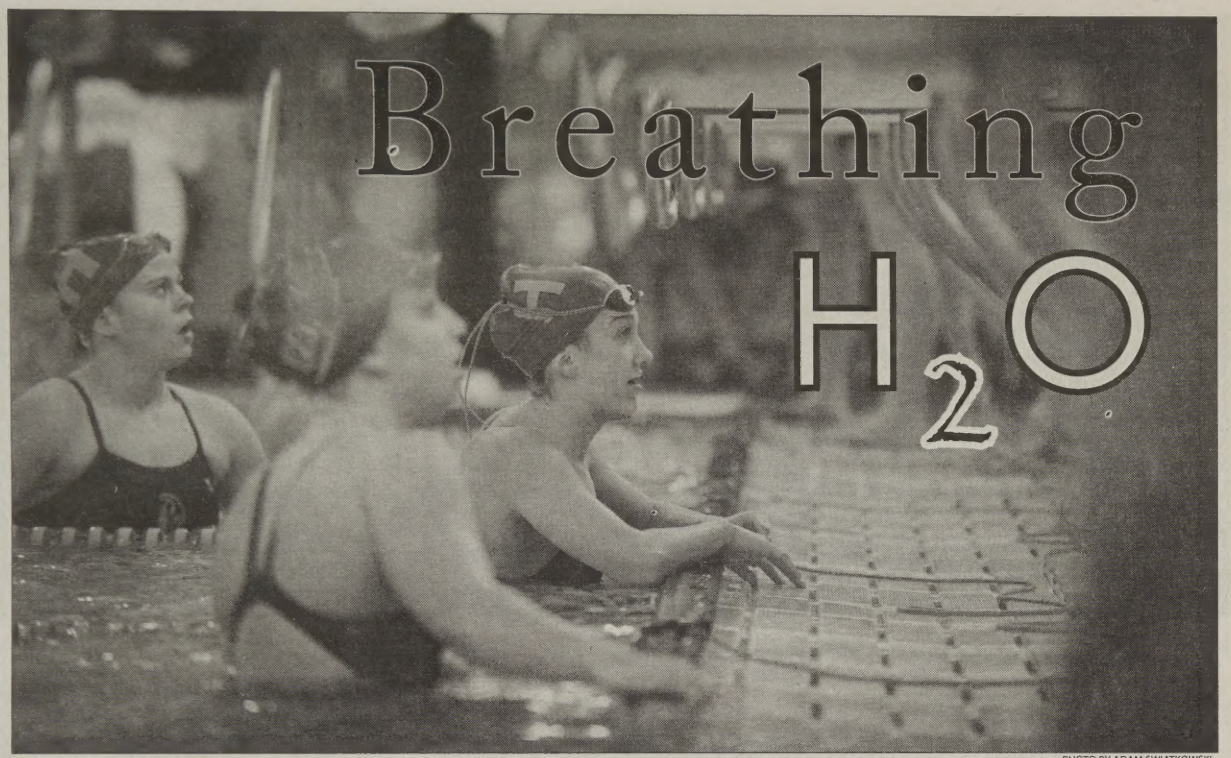


PHOTO BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI

Megan Johnson (10) rests after her heat at the team's conference meet. Rigorous morning and afternoon practices contribute to success at meets.

Swimmers stay focused in and out of water, prepare for sectionals

BY EMMA LEININGER
Writer

The swim team's season began on Dec. 2 with a swim meet against East Noble and Bishop Luers. Since then, the team has won eight out of its 11 meets. The team has been working very hard on their performance in the water, their techniques and even getting to know each other better.

In order for the team to build up endurance and strength, they are required to attend dryland practices.

Dryland is essentially conditioning which allows the swimmers to better their stamina. This improves their performance in the water as it enables everyone to use more strength to cut down the times in their events.

"I've gotten better at the little things, like push-offs, streamline, flip-turns and breathing less," Kaarin Herendeen (9) said.

The team seems to work constantly as they have practice after school and, on certain days, before school starts.

Due to this, a few members of the team sometimes find it hard to find the motivation to attend practice and improve.

Along those same lines, having a positive mindset at practice in order to perform your best is also a challenge to some.

Despite the challenges, the team has a very high amount of drive and passion that allows them to do well.

Swimmers have very high expectations in regards to their own performance and they continue to strive to do their best.

"My main focus is anything I can do to get my time down, especially regarding technique." Logan Pollander (12) said.

Morning practices extremely benefit the team throughout the course of the season since they allow extra time in the water. Not only do morning practices benefit the team physically, but also create discipline and drive in the swimmers.

> **"My main focus is anything I can do to get my time down, especially regarding technique."**
>
> -Logan Pollander (12)

Due to the extreme amount of practice, swimmers have to learn how to manage their time with schoolwork and other outside activities along with their practice schedule.

This intense practice schedule gives the team high expectations for the rest of the season. As sectionals are coming up within the next month head coach, Bobby Mattin, believes Homestead's team will be very competitive. Although the competition has always been very close, he is optimistic that the team will come out on top.

"We had some very, very fast swims very early on in the season." Mattin said.

Along with the team's performance in the water, they have been working on bonding as a team and creating new traditions

"Sometimes in practice we do these exercises where you swim a set and then learn a couple facts about the team." Herendeen said.

The team also gets to know each other better at meets and on bus rides as they are with each other for long periods of time.

All of the training and hard work the swimmers the swimmers have been putting in throughout the season is leading up to sectionals which, for girls, begins on Feb. 5 and for boys, Feb. 19. After sectionals, the team's main focus will be state.

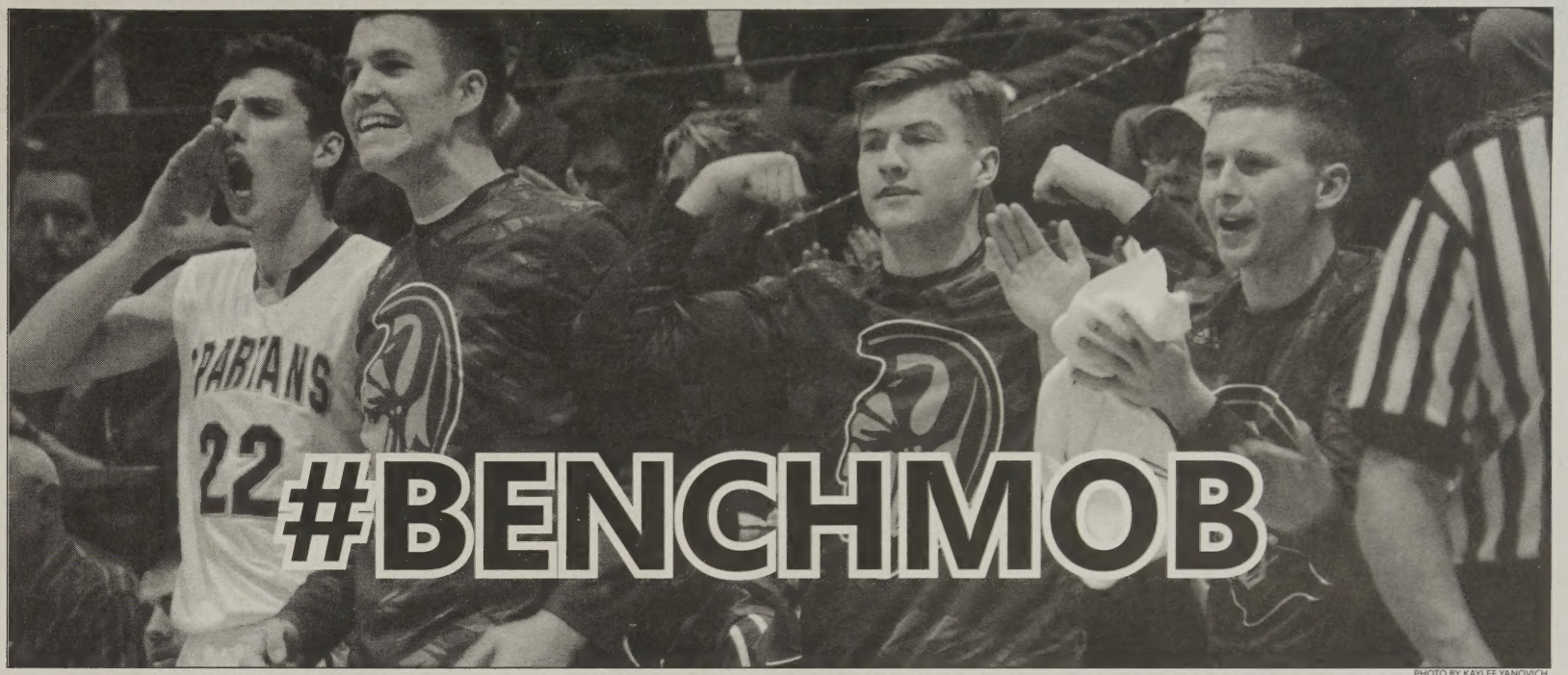


PHOTO BY KAYLEE YANOVICH

Tyler French (12), Luke Cooper (12), Gunnar Goebel (12) and Travis Lake (12) stand rooting for the school at a basketball game. The enthusiasm and passion of the Benchmob enhances the games.

Benchmob hypes the crowd from the bench, hopes new members will continue legacies

BY KAYLEE YANOVICH
Writer

The Spartans are down 14-20 in an intense basketball game and they really need some energy. The crowd is dying down, and out of nowhere, cheers and screams are heard from the sidelines. But who is making all this noise? It is none other than the Homestead Benchmob.

This rowdy group of boys consists of Luke Cooper (12), Gunnar Goebel (12), Jake Wolfcale (11), Ben Skowronek (11), Tyler French (12), Travis Lake (12), JJ Foster (10), Teddy Ray (12) and their two managers, Nick Wright (11) and Tomas Novoa-Fonte (12), and they all came together during the 2014 basketball playoff season.

"We just started getting really excited and bringing the energy for the games and just really enjoying the atmosphere and the hype," Luke Cooper (12) said.

They do not play as much as other members of the team, hence the term Benchmob, but do not really care. They bring energy to every game, creating different celebrations for things such as a dunk or three-pointer.

"We're just sitting the bench, which normally is a bad thing, but our team is good so it's fun," Gunnar Goebel (12) said.

After a short while of the guys doing this, someone coined the phrase Benchmob and it just stuck. The guys bring the energy not only to get them and their team pumped, but the crowd as well. While the Benchmob is a great way to get the student section hyped up, they also come in handy when they are at away games, and there's a smaller crowd cheering for the Spartans.

"It'll be quiet and whatnot, and so we just get obnoxiously loud for every little good thing we do," Goebel said.

The crowd at the basketball games can expect many different creative celebrations, such as the bow and arrow, which they do for three-point shots, the field goal, and the jack hammer.

One particular game that the guys have agreed was a little crazier than the rest was the game against Carroll, held at home.

During the Carroll game, the guys had a game plan: they got hyped from the top, went nuts, celebrated every little thing, and overall had a lot of fun. Although this is the routine for every game the Spartans play, this particular game was enhanced by the massive student section helping the guys out.

"No team compares to us," Jake Wolfcale (11) said.

The Benchmob even had stickers made for their cars to identify themselves as part of this group. Teddy Ray's (12) mother had them made over the summer of 2014 and the guys bought them from her. These stickers displayed the phrase '#BENCHMOB.'

"We proudly rep them on our cars to this day," Cooper said.

But what will happen when the guys graduate this year, and almost all of them are gone? Will there be people to take their place?

"There better be," Goebel said. "We had an old team this year with a lot of seniors, so it'll be interesting to see who steps up and joins the Benchmob in the following years."

For anyone who is interested in seeing what the Benchmob has in store for the rest of the season,whether it's a home or away game, or whether there's a small crowd or a huge one, the Benchmob will be in full force at every game.

2014-15 BENCHMOB Roster

Luke Cooper - Senior
Gunnar Goebel - Senior
Tyler French - Senior
Travis Lake - Senior
Teddy Ray - Senior
Jake Wolfcale - Junior
Ben Skowronek - Junior
JJ Foster - Freshman

we got the beat

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Left: Christian Tapp (11) plays the guitar and sings, specializing in acoustic music. He has played venues such as the Mocha Lounge. Lower left: A group of musicians consisting of Aaron Stone (10) and Matt Killham (10), as well as other high school musicians, entertains a crowd at a Kate's Kart fundraiser. Below: Local band Syndicate plays an acoustic set for the Dream. Create. Inspire. gala

PHOTO BY KYLIE POLING

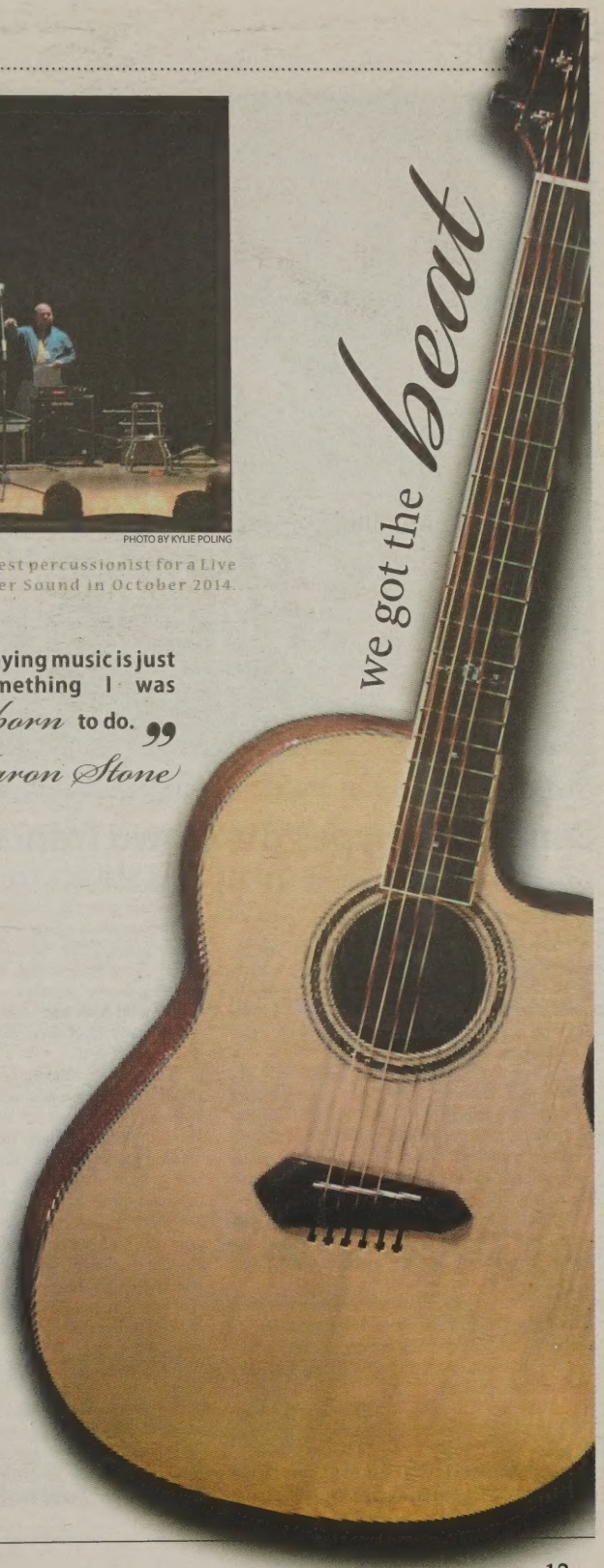
Aaron Stone (10) drums as a special guest percussionist for a Live Sound Recording class at Sweetwater Sound in October 2014.

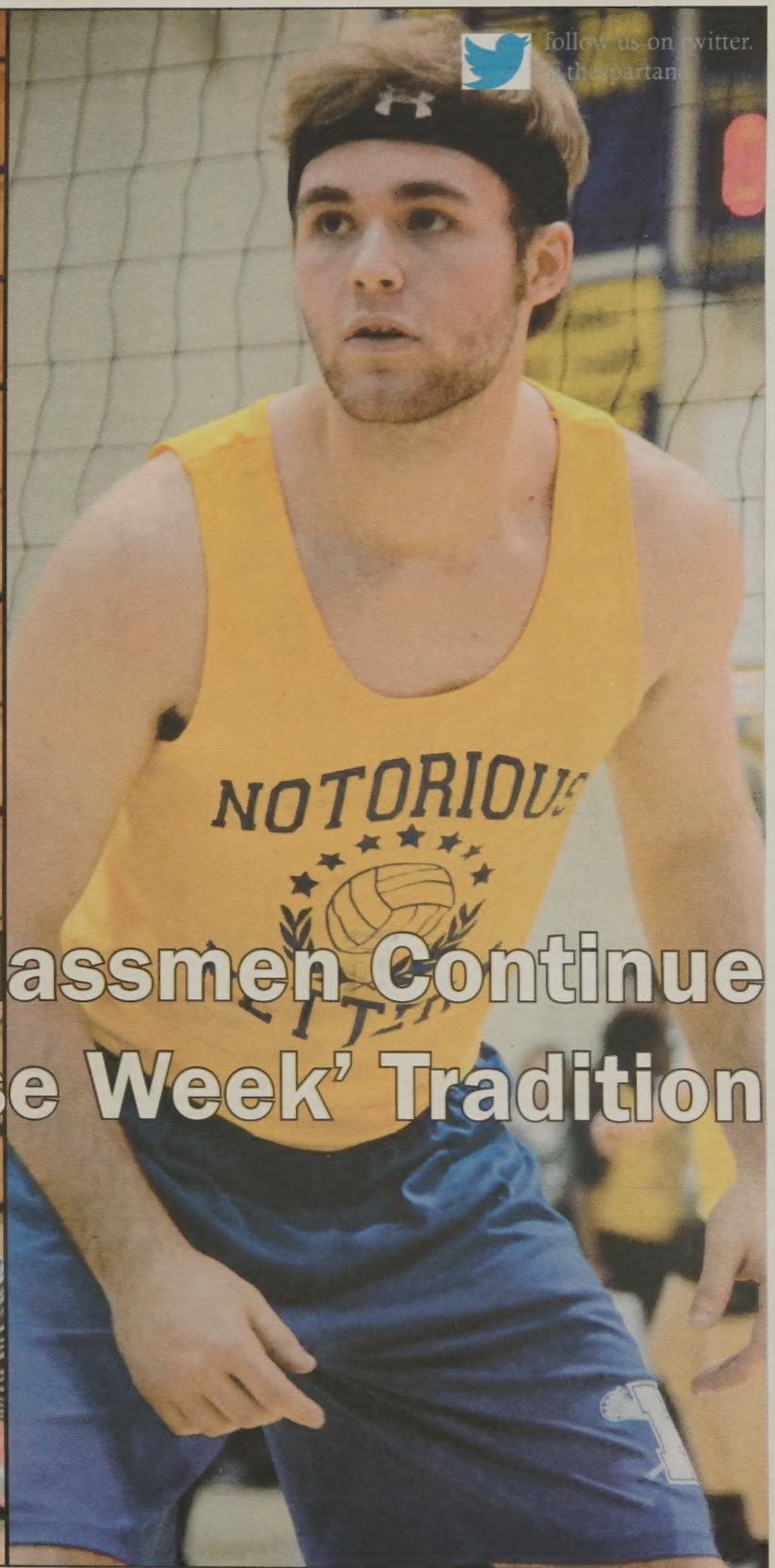
PHOTO BY KYLIE POLING

"Playing music is just something I was *born* to do."

-Aaron Stone

PHOTO BY KYLIE POLING





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Upperclassmen Continue 'Just Because Week' Tradition

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friday, february 27, 2015

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The Spartana has, and may continue to, operate as a limited open forum for the free exchange of ideas.

Staff members support the First Amendment in its entirety and oppose censorship in any form. The content of the paper is determined by the student staff. In cases of potentially controversial material, the Editorial Board will meet to decide the content of the newspaper. The staff will be assisted by the adviser in areas of professional ethics and legalities.

Material that is libelous or obscene as defined by Fort Wayne Newspapers or could cause a substantial and material disruption of the school day as defined by the Supreme Court will not be printed.

Southwest Allen County corporation encourages vigorous treatment of a wide range of subject matter, including controversial issues, and student journalists are free to report and to editorialize on events, ideas, and issues in their high school, community, nation, and world according to Policy Number 4150.

Public input will be accepted from the Homestead community in the form of letters to the editor. Letters must follow standards concerning libel or obscenity.

Those that could cause a substantial and material disruption to the school day will not be printed. Letters can be e-mailed to The Spartana at thespartana@gmail.com

Girls, boys basketball players make college decisions

Recruiters, twitter accounts attempt to sway decisions from Spartan athletes

BY KYLIE POLING
Online Editor

The boys basketball team lost its first game to an Indiana team Feb. 20, losing by 13 points to the Snider Panthers; however, the second ranked team in the state has many assets, in the form of its players, who are sought after by colleges around the country. Dana Batt (12) has already committed to Colgate University, but the remaining seniors will have until May 20 to sign a National Letter of Intent to Division I schools and Aug. 1 for Division II schools. Signing begins April 15.

Caleb Swanigan (12) has in fact received offers from more than 18 schools. Currently, the official visits Swanigan has embarked upon include Duke University on Feb. 18, where he watched the Blue Devils play North Carolina; University of Kentucky on Nov. 11, 2014; and University of Arizona Oct. 18, 2014. Michigan State has also expressed keen interest in Swanigan's abilities, with Tom Izzo, MSU's head coach, visiting during the Spartans' loss to Snider.

Coach Matt Painter of Purdue University was also present for the Spartans' loss to Snider, sitting on the sidelines observing the game closely. Painter has observed Swanigan's game on several occasions, and Kentucky coach John Calipari has stopped by on occasion as well.

"We prepare them no differently (for playing in front of recruiters)," Chris Johnson, Homestead head coach, said. "We don't even talk about it."

Some fans have even begun to question Swanigan about his commitments, creating twitter accounts in his honor for the schools of their choice. @SwaniganTo, which goes by the name of 'Get Swanigan To UK' tweeted: @Biggs_Swanigan Do you really need convinced that UK is the best school out there for a stud like yourself? #BBN #AskAnthonyDavis.

Ranked in the top 25 of the nation by Rivals.com, Swanigan has endless possibilities before him. More than likely, however, there will be no final decision from him until after the season is over.

"It makes it hard because everybody is trying to sell themselves and nobody is going to tell you the worst," Swanigan said in an interview with the IndyStar. "But it does make it better to get to know the coaches."

Signing to a college is just the next step in a lifetime love of the game.

"Our players are always excited during the signing process because they are visioning the next chapter in their (lives)," Johnson said.

Meanwhile, some of the players for the girls team have committed. Josie Williams (12) will play for Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne, while Cali Casaburo (12) and Courtney McPheters (12) will play for Trine University this fall. Additionally, soccer players Morgann Williams (12) signed to Bowling Green University and Tori Hall (12) signed with Sienna Heights University.

The winter athletes have a bit more time to decide, though.

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Caleb Swanigan is recognized as a part of McDonald's All American Team.

"The only thing I share with (my players) is to make sure (the school) is a good fit for them both academically and athletically," Johnson said. "As a coach, you care for all your players and wish all players the best in all their endeavors."

Scholastics Art and Writing winners announced

70 Regional gold keys, silver keys, and honorable mentions awarded to students

BY TESSA VIRGILLIO
News Editor

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition, the 92 year-old event whose alumni include artist Andy Warhol and writer Sylvia Plath, honored student artists and writers Feb. 2 with more than 70 regional awards: gold keys, silver keys or honorable mentions.

One gold key winner, Nirupama Devanathan (11), was awarded top honors as an American Voice Finalist for her writing, and gold key winner Kiersten Madsen's (11) artwork Arsonists' Lullaby was purchased by the News Sentinel to become a part of their permanent art collection.

> **"I think I have to (write and make art) because... it gives me a state of peace..."**
>
> **-Hallie Nowak**

In 2014, 255,000 works of student art and writing were received by Scholastic, and the number of submissions rises annually. From this lot, more than 68,000 were presented regional awards and celebrated at local venues, such as the Fort Wayne Museum of Art. Each year, the top 2,000 works in the United States earn national medals and are celebrated at a ceremony at Carnegie Hall.

Hallie Nowak (12), awarded four gold keys in writing and an honorable mention in art, did not expect any large honors when she submitted her work, given what she knew about the Scholastic judging process. Notable past jurors include Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Judy Blume and Tony Hawk.

"There are different judges each year, so they have different preferences," Nowak said. "Judging art is very subjective, so they probably all have very different tastes of what they think is good and what they think is not good, what they think will make it and what they think won't."

The creation of worthy works is a sequence of trial and error for many students. In Nowak's eyes, the composition of a piece of writing or the production of a completed artwork is defined as an "endless cycle."

"I have to be in a certain mood, I think, to be able to do something," Nowak said. "Usually, I'll be writing or painting at like three in the morning on a school night. That's when I feel the best about my (art and writing)."

Madison Moore (12) is a photographer whose subjects include friends, still life and herself in a couple self-portraits. Moore received three gold keys and two silver keys in photography. Inspired by her father, an avid photographer, Moore identifies her creative process with suddenness, as she will experience only a fleeting inspiration for a photo shoot, but run with the initial concept.

"If I have an idea, I just try to organize it as quick as I can so I can keep it with the original idea that I had," Moore said. "I'll call my friends and ask them if they can model for me and get it done as soon as I can, develop the film and start finding out what the best pictures are in that roll."

Students draw inspiration and encouragement from various sources, including their peers and teachers.

"I think these awards validate that I'm making good art, and it's nice to know that other people think it's a worthwhile pursuit," Moore said. "Mr. Manco is a big inspiration because he's always trying to get you to try different things and show you new techniques and new projects."

There is no particular framework that students are confined to in their work, as "young artists and writers are free to explore any and all topics" when submitting to Scholastic, according to artandwriting.org.

"As any teacher of writing will tell you, there are certain things that will just stand out, and depending upon what kind of thing we're talking about, often originality will play a major role (along with other elements)," Dr. David Price, English teacher, said.

Students are able to submit work to 28 separate categories. If a student achieves a regional gold key award, they are elevated to the national competition for gold medal, silver medal and American Visions & Voices Medal.

There is scholarship money available at the national level, and National Medalists will be announced March 16. Participation in the competition has aided innumerable authors and artists in recognizing their potential and to continue their craft.

"I think I have to (write and make art) because it has helped me with a lot of things," Nowak said. "It gives me a state of peace in my head. And my teachers help me so much; they're all really great and they just kept on pushing me, and now I want to be a writer. (Writing and art) have led me to that self-discovery."

For examples of winning artwork, flip to page 12.

Best Dressed of JUST BECAUSE WEEK

PHOTO BY EMMA ZOLMAN

Mekenzie Vachon(12), Gaby Meissner(11), Luke Cooper(12), Madelyn Kartman(12) and Sydney Yergler(12) dress patriotically on Monday.

'Merica Monday

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

Rachel Faley(10) and Brooke Ward(10) chose tie dye shirts on Tuesday.

Tie Dye Tuesday

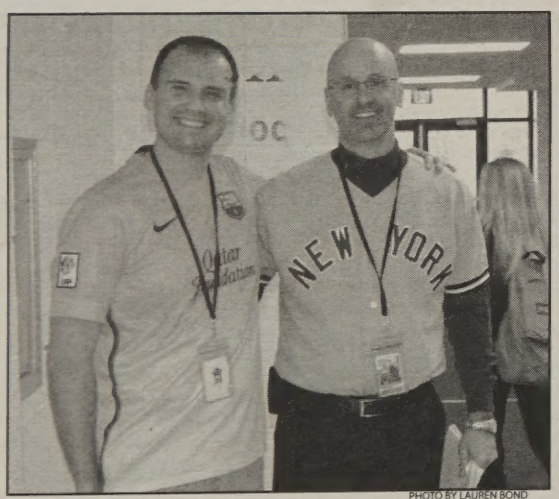


PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

Justin Peeper, Spanish teacher, and Park Ginder, principal don jerseys.

Jersey Wednesday

PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

Sarah Alexander(10) and Sydney Antisdel(11) dress up on Thursday.

Dress to Impress Thursday

For photos of Raging Neon Friday, visit hhsspartana.com!

Anti-Vaccination movement may have consequences

Parents refusing to vaccinate children could cause serious epidemic of previously eradicated virus

BY COLBY SHOUP
Multimedia Manager

As of Feb. 2 the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has confirmed that approximately 102 cases of measles exist in the United States after an outbreak in ,Disney's California Adventure Park late last year. This epidemic of a previously eradicated disease has been attributed to the growing number of parents who have refused to vaccinate their children with the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine, fearing that the vaccination will give their kids autism.

Both The White House and the CDC have released statements backing vaccinations, claiming that the research supposedly proving that measles vaccines is hackneyed and untrustworthy, but this hasn't stopped the anti-vaccination movement from continuing to spread their message and encouraging parents to avoid letting pediatricians give their kids an MMR vaccine.

The Anti-vaccination lobbyists, or "anti-vaxxers" as they were dubbed by Time Magazine's Science Editor Jeffrey Kluger, back-up their beliefs by citing a controversial 1998 study by former British surgeon and medical researcher Andrew Wakefield and 12 others who have since withdrawn their names from the paper. The study, which was published in the trusted medical journal The Lancet, claimed that out of 12 children who were vaccinated, eight began showing behavioral symptoms of autism within two weeks of being given the MMR vaccine. Amidst its release, the study was immediately questioned by experts around the world and similar studies were conducted, each one utilizing larger test subjects and finding results contradictory to Wakefield's original findings.

After years of disapproval from the medical world, the study was finally retracted by The Lancet in 2004 with the publication's senior editor claiming that Wakefield's results were "fatally flawed" and also made questionable because of Wakefield's previously unknown conflict of interest when it came to the subject (he had long before the study spoken out against the MMR vaccine by claiming with no certifiable evidence that it caused Chrohn's Disease and had been given test subjects by a lawyer who was planning a lawsuit against the makers of the MMR vaccine. Three years previously, Wakefield's medical license was revoked and the former medical authority became a pariah in the scientific community.

> **"To the ignorant but caring parent, the MMR vaccine is an easy target to blame for the struggle that can often come with having an autistic child."**

Yet the "anti-vaxxers" have continued to insist on the link between the MMR vaccine and autism, refusing to vaccinate their children, and, since there is no law that says that the government can force people to get vaccines, they have been free to refuse to vaccinate children since the aforementioned article's population first started the anti-vaccination movement.

Because of the gradually growing number of supporters behind Wakefield's study, 2014 saw a record breaking 600 cases of measles in the U.S. (that's more than any cases reported in the last 20 years), which is worrisome as measles, which begins with the symptoms of a common cold, can cause long term brain damage, pneumonia, deafness and, in some cases, death.

A recent poll conducted by PR Newswire showed that an overwhelming 92% of 3,000 physicians polled blame the majority of measles' resurgence in America on "anti vaxxers," and a lofty 72% believe that the unvaccinated children should not attend schools with other kids, as this will help the epidemic spread faster. With these expert opinions in mind, the concerned parents of the anti-vaccination movement are in the wrong and are ultimately putting not just their own children but everyone in the world at risk based solely on their personal beliefs which are not backed by sufficient information.

This does not mean however, that "anti-vaxxers" are completely irrational in their mistakes. Currently, very little is known about the cause of autism, and anti-vaccination parents like celebrity "anti-vaxxer" and actress Jenny McCarthy, whose son is autistic, may just be looking for something to blame for their children's conditions. To the ignorant but caring parent, the MMR vaccine is an easy target to blame for the struggle that can often come with having an autistic child. Lastly, in the internet era, it is incredibly easy for passionate but misguided activists to publish information for impressionable parents like McCarthy to see. In fact, there are entire websites dedicated to the cause of spreading the misinformation of Wakefield's studies, such as autismone.org, which has multiple videos about the falsified information posted, each one boasting over 1,000 views.

In order to prevent the "anti-vaxxer" movement from gaining more steam and the measles becoming a serious problem for America again, the United States needs to invest in educating the general public about both the reality of the MMR vaccination not causing autism and the importance of getting vaccinated for measles and other dangerous diseases. This will not necessarily stop the anti-vaccination movement entirely, but it will stop them from spreading one of the few things that may be just as dangerous as a fatal disease: toxic misinformation.

Internet memes are good entertainment, not trouble

Memes should be considered a positive component in society, not opportunity to satirize others

BY KATIE MAHER
Business Manager

There are three types of relationships a person may have with internet memes; those who love them to the extent of overusing them, those who hate them and those who say they hate them but secretly love them. The Washington Post even had memes on the top of their list of "12 Things the World Needs to Throw Out." But, in the reality of it all, are memes really that problematic? Well, it depends on the context and usage.

By Google's definition, a meme is "an element of culture or system of behavior passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation." So in reality, memes have been around *for centuries*. "Pull my finger" and even knock-knock jokes are memes by definition. The memes we think of are created from the same process, but they are formatted to the computer. All memes, transmitted by mouth or tweet, are a way to connect and joke, but can irritate or offend others.

For example, consider the "your mom" joke made popular from TV show *The Office*. The joke started from Steve Carrell's character's use of it, and spread to viewers of the popular TV show. The response is intended to be a joke, and is still repeated daily on a widespread scale--even though it has crude undertones and can be irritable due to over usage. The same phenomenon can happen on the internet.

Even though there has been past insensitivity with memes, several believe internet memes are evolving to a more good-hearted breed.

"I love the sad frog meme" Lauren Rapson (10), internet meme user, said. "I think it has a more positive message."

Even from the past couple of years, the difference in Internet sensitivity is obvious. A popular meme in 2011 targeted "ignorant girls"; picturing a girl oblivious to musical groups. This idea is quite demeaning towards teenage girls in general. But a modern favorite, the "sad frog" meme, does not make fun of others or a group of people, but rather the person posting the meme itself. It is safe to laugh at something that is yours to laugh about, instead of making fun of others. Laughing at yourself only benefits how you feel.

"My heart races when I see a meme," Ellen Chevillet (12), meme enthusiast, said. "They always put me in a good mood".

So really, the world should not "throw away" memes; ideally, the world never will. Sharing ideas and imitating is a part of every culture. Learning to laugh both at and with yourself solves any problem earlier associated with internet memes. Only spread good "feels" and "feel good, man" in return.

What is your favorite meme?

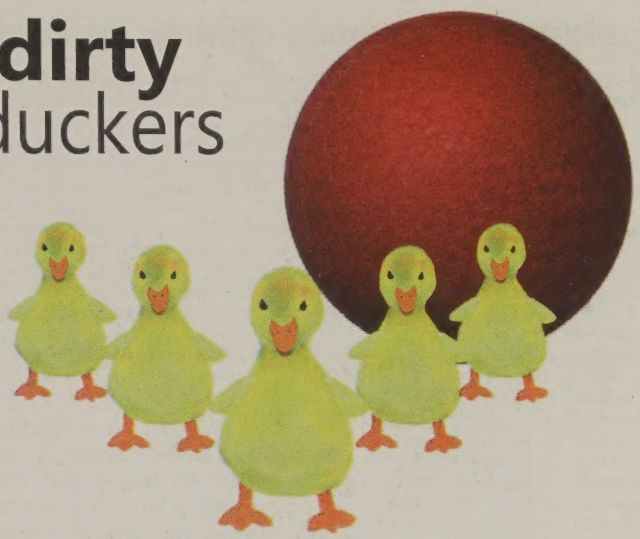
Homestead students pick which meme they like the most

Sad Frog	24
Y U No?	00
Doge	04
Forever Alone	00
Trollface	00
Stare Dad	01
Kermit the Frog	03

WINNER:

SAD FROG

dirty duckers



The upperclassmen girls battled it out Wednesday, February 18 for the ultimate claim to fame: Dirty Duckers champions. The junior and senior teams were placed onto two separate brackets, with the winners of each class facing each other for the final championship. This year's tournament was double elimination, meaning that teams would have to lose twice in order to be out of the tournament. For each class, there was a winners' bracket and a losers' bracket, so once a team lost their first game they were placed onto the losers' bracket, and the winner of the winners' bracket would play the winning team of the losers' bracket. The junior class champions were The Gym Class Heroes, and the Incredi-balls represented the senior class. Eventually, the Incredi-balls won the first two games of the final round, claiming its title as grand champion for the second year in a row.

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

Morgan McKay (12) attacks the opposing team while wearing Christmas attire, lead by her team's coach Mitch Purlee (12).

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

LEFT: Emma Zolman (12) prepares to throw the dodgeball.
RIGHT: Catie Flory (11) waits on the sideline to reenter the junior quarterfinals game.

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

A team comprised of seniors celebrates a win in the intial rounds of the Dirty Duckers tournament.

notorious netters

Notorious Netters is a male-exclusive volleyball tournament. Teams of six, headed by one or two female coaches, rotate around the court, passing the ball to a maximum of three hits per side of the net. Teams had to win by two points per game in order to claim a victory and move on the next round. A team could lose a single game and still compete in the tournament, however, as the brackets for Notorious Netters were double-elimination. The Class of 2015 and the Class of 2016 bump, set and spiked to the finish, but ultimately the seniors took home the victory.

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

A senior team and junior team shakes hands post-match in a sportsman-like manner. The junior team, pictured wearing blue shirts, was compised of Drew Lunsford (11), Austin Krider (11), Brady Sheehan (11), Hank Leitz (11), Sam Krivacs (11), and Zach Warner (11).

Bere Clarke (12) waits at the net for the ball to be passed to him. Clarke played for New Kids on the Block, a senior team competing in the tournament.

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Juniors should take initiative to begin looking at colleges

JESS SAYIN'

JESSICA TEBBEN
Life Editor

As you have probably heard me say at least once in real life, college is hard. Making decisions and finding the time and motivation to make those decisions is difficult in the midst of what some may consider the best year of your life. Nonetheless, it is important to begin thinking about this transition into college early; waiting until the last minute to make every single college decision is not beneficial to you or your sanity. I obviously did not start early so I have no credence when discussing this topic, and I have no right to give you any advice, but I'm going to do it anyway.

The first and most important thing to remember is that no one expects you to know what you want to do for the rest of your life. If you do not know what you would like to do, start researching early. My dad forced me to take a personality test to tell me that I should be a speech pathologist, and although that is definitely not something I am interested in, there were other occupations that I think would be interesting. If your dad makes you take a personality test, you should probably do it.

I have addressed the dreaded Common Application in a prior column, but I am going to address it again to emphasize that it takes a very long time. What takes longer are the essays you are required to write for the Common App, plus other applications that are not available on the Common App, plus scholarships. Generally, the essay prompts are fairly similar and about depressing things like "What struggles have you faced that have taught you a lesson?" Still, you should at least attempt to complete a broad essay over the summer to begin using when applications become available.

Whenever applications come out, start to fill out the basic stuff. You know your name and address (hopefully), you know your parents' names and you should probably get a head start on memorizing your social security number. Focus on the easy stuff first and then you will have more of a capacity to focus on the in-depth questions.

When you begin to get accepted to colleges, it obviously feels great. After all, you paid money to apply, so it is nice to know everything paid off. It gets stressful again, however, when you think about decisions. Find a college campus that you love and that has a lot of variety. Do not stress about choosing a major; no choice is permanent. That goes for college, too. If you absolutely loathe being at school every day, you should probably consider transferring. Likewise, if you realize you have no interest in speech pathology, you should probably change your major.

My own decision and application process is not finished. My dad is still filling out FASFA. I have not been keeping up on scholarship opportunities. I have not committed to a college, and I have not found a roommate. So, I am a little bit freaked out. Even if you're organized when it comes to college, your motivation level is going to be at an all-time low during senior year (yes, senioritis seems to be real), so it is important to start early so you can put your best work forward. Taking time could get you into your dream college, and it could get help pay for a lot of your schooling.

This is a pretty serious topic, so it is hard to make jokes about it (other than college tuition, which is the biggest and least funny joke I have ever heard in my short life). Remember that you still have time to figure out what you want. Do not rush your decisions; do your homework over the summer so you can enjoy your senior year.

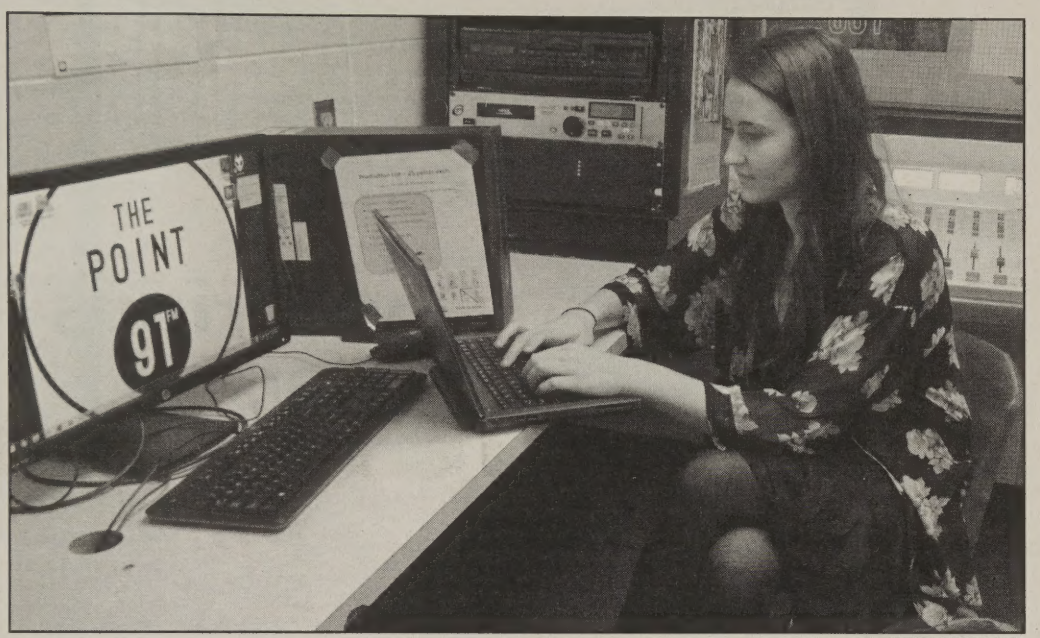


PHOTO BY KAYLEEYANOVICH

Tatum Ellis (12) works on her computer to finish online courses as well as regular courses to graduate high school this year.

What it takes to graduate early

Seniors talk about the process to end at seventh semester

BY KAYLEE YANOVICH
Writer

While most students will be attending classes for their freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years, there is a handful that will be graduating with either six or seven seven semesters' worth of high school credits. How do they do this exactly? It takes more planning than most people would think.

When a student wants to graduate early or skip a grade, he or she needs to do a lot of thinking ahead. For the small group of students who have decided to graduate early, the process was not easy by any means.

"With having to squish so many of my classes together and juggle an online class schedule as well as my regular one, just from a time-and-workload perspective, it was a little bit difficult," Tatum Ellis (12), a six semester graduate, said.

While juggling classes might seem easy to some students,there are more things to take into consideration when deciding to graduate early.

"I don't think it's the credits and getting out of homework; I think what's more important is 'do you have a plan? What are you going to do when you get out? And are you ready to leave the building itself?'" Amy Hamilton, guidance counselor, said.

Not only do students have to consider the work and future aspects of their decision, but their social aspects as well.

> **"I' m going to be eligible for scholarships for graduating early, and I' m going to be able to be happier with a flexible schedule at college."**
>
> **TJ Bishop (12)**

"If you really love high school and you love the experience and the journey of being able to be a senior, then stay," TJ Bishop (11) said.

Although there are a lot of downsides or setbacks to graduating earlier than most students, there are some major advantages as well. This looks extremely good on college applications as well as job resumes.

"I'm going to be younger when I get into the workforce," Bishop said. "I'm going to be eligible for scholarships for graduating early, and I'm going to be able to be happier with a flexible schedule at college."

Not to mention, counselors and teachers willing to meet with students provides a great support system. They are there to guide the students in the right direction and help them plan their high school experience, help students determine what they want to do after high school.

"Mrs. Hamilton gave me some tough love on a couple different occasions because I tend to be very ambitious in the amount of work I think I can take on, and I would come into her office two or three times a week saying 'I can't do all this,'" Ellis said.

While skipping a grade seems like the greatest thing in the world, not many students decide to take this route. Only about 10 to 15 students this year thought this was the correct choice for them.

If graduating early seems like a good option, make sure to start early, have a plan and get ready for the future.

"You have to make sure you're ready to let go of high school, and be ready to start a new chapter in your life," Hamilton said.

PHOTO BY AWBREI VACHON

PHOTO COURTESY OF EVAN GERDOM

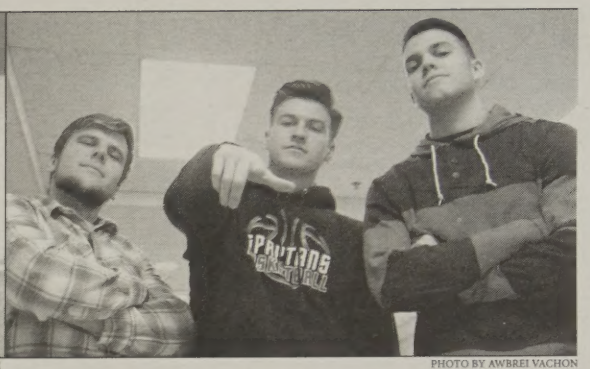
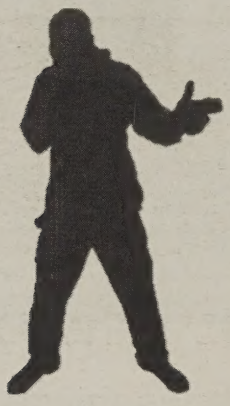


PHOTO BY AWBREI VACHON

Medici (left), TSK (center) and Capetian Fam (right), who are known among their peers for their impressive raps each against one another, pose for a photo with the guys in their rap groups

The Rap Game



BY AWBREI VACHON
Writer

Welcome to the rap game. The school's rap groups, Ten Seventeen Kings (TSK), the Medici Family and the Capetian Fam have been battling for the spot of best rap group, and it is time the public got an inside look at this competition.

Over the years, there has been an unknown number of students to take on the same challenge, including Maxwell Kruger ('13), Cody Womble ('13) and Jordan Packer ('13) to name a few. These guys were popular topics among their peers, just as TSK, Medici and Capetian are now. The first step in getting to know these groups is to introduce the members of each. Evan Gerdom (12), Zach Alexander (12) and Chase Mathis (12) have on occasion rapped for the group TSK. Medici is another group in the rap game, whose members include Caleb Swanigan (12), Tahj Curry (11), Jonah Watson (11), Jeffery Watson (12), Jordan Wargo (11), Rashaad Stokes (11) and Tyler Bailey (11). Lastly, the Capetian Fam is comprised of Nick Anderson (12), Luke Cooper (12) and Gunnar Goebel (12).

The second step is to understand how the individual groups began.

"We've been rapping for about four years on the side, (but) only recently have we begun to record our songs and display them to the public," said Gerdom, also known as Cynical.

According to Gerdom, the title TSK was inspired by 1017 Brick Squad Monopoly, whose founder was Gucci Mane. Gerdom and Alexander agreed on the acronym one late night in Gerdom's garage.

As for Medici, the title was decided about a year ago after hearing Kanye West mention something about the Medici Family on Vine. Medici was pulled into the game when TSK called them out in a rap, and the group could not resist joining in.

"We don't (rap) that often, (but) TSK first made a rap about us jokingly, (so) then we just made one back at (them)," Curry said. "Realistically though, (Swanigan) is the only one (who) actually raps."

Meanwhile, the Capetian Fam was inspired by their fellow rap groups.

"There was a lot of talk that TSK was rapping and Medici was coming out with raps and they were dissing each other, and we kind of just wanted to join," Anderson said. "We kind of just looked up the most powerful families and Medici was number two and Capetian was number one, so we thought we would take that on and call ourselves the Capetian Family."

In Capetian's rap "We Are," Cooper references a former rap group by the name of Tha Problem, which he, Anderson, Tyler Strunk (12) and Grant Bastin (12) formed during their freshman year to make fun of the school's rap groups at that particular time. The group even made t-shirts to sell to their classmates. This time however, the Capetian Fam is all grown up and experienced, and thus "the solution," according to the song.

When it comes to hitting the recording studio, or lack thereof, the guys have a couple different methods of documenting their raps.

"(Our rap) was all freestyle," Curry said. "We record it on our phones and go to SoundCloud and just put it on there."

On the other hand, Capetian put a little more time and thought into the perfect comeback.

"Too much time goes into this," Anderson said. "I love rap, and I wish I was good. I want to say that I'm good, but I'm not. (So) it was really hard, (and) it takes a very, very long time, but it's all worth it in the end."

TSK's members also do not record their freestyle raps, but instead sets aside time on the weekends to record songs and put them on SoundCloud.

No matter what they rap about, these groups make a point to establish dominance.

"I feel that Medicci looks up to us (as) father figures as well as Capetian," Gerdom said. "If it wasn't for TSK, these other groups would have zero relevance."

Capetian and Medici would disagree, and they have argued so in their songs.

"We haven't got a chance to come back at the Capetian Family yet, (but) Medici is down for any competition that anybody or any other family or group throws at us," Curry said.

Of course, there will not be any back-alley fights; the rap game is all for fun.

"It's nothing serious, we're just making fun of each other," Anderson said. "It's kind of been dead recently, but it's so fun."

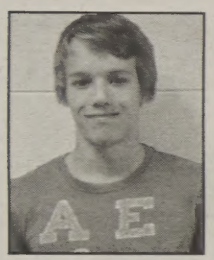
Whether there will be any rap battles or comebacks in the near future, no one knows; but stay tuned to hear what the groups have to say next time.

New, anticipated US superstar skier arises

With the gradual decline of legendary US Olympic skier Bode Miller comes a face that has long been thrust into the shadows. Despite being at the top of his discipline for over five years and four-time world champion of the giant slalom, Ted Ligety, 30, is only now gaining fame for his accomplishments.

Now the figurehead for the US men's ski team, Ligety has already begun reaching expectations, winning the 2015 world championship in the giant slalom, or the super-G for the third time in a row. He holds an impressive resume in the event, with an Olympic gold in 2006 and over 20 World Cup wins across his career. Ligety's mastery of the super-G is one that helped him reach the podium in every super-G event for almost two years.

'KOWSKI'S CORNER



BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Sports Editor

But, why is a skier with such an illustrious career only gaining recognition now? Ligety's ascension to the top of the sport, unfortunately, coincided directly with Miller's rise to a skiing phenomenon across the world, but his quality has always been there.

Often regarded as a super-G specialist, Ligety must excel both in speed and finesse, the combination of the downhill and slalom events. Super-G is often considered the true test of a great skier, and Ligety has all but assured that he is one of the best.

The quiet life is something Ligety appreciates, often being distant while other skiers enjoy the limelight. His simple upbringing in the skiing town of Park City, Utah, is not one of tribulation or much interest in comparison to long-time legends and new up-and-comers with something to prove.

However, the majority of American skiing fans were finally behind Ligety at the 2015 world championships in Vail, Colorado, with an expectation for success as well as a medal on home soil. In the two run super-G event, Ligety finished his first run 0.24 seconds behind the leader, and needed something special to make up the time deficit. His second run was virtually perfect, and as he passed the finish line with the fastest combined time of the day, the American fans roared, cheering deafeningly through both the release of tension and pride for an American to finally win gold in front of the home crowd.

Now Ligety continues on his journey to the top of the sport, with a new expectation from American skiing fans to represent the nation.

PHOTO BY MEGAN BUTLER

Lindley Kistler (11) shoots the ball high, beyond the reach of the opposing team. At semi-state on Feb. 28, the girls compete against Merrillville

Girls varsity basketball making great strides towards season goals

BY EMMA LEININGER
Writer

The girls varsity basketball team is currently fourth in the state and twenty-second in the nation. They now have added to their list of accomplishments with a regional championship trophy and will be advancing to semi-state, which will be played on Feb. 28.

Homestead will be playing Merrillville at Crown Point at 3 p.m., and admission is eight dollars. Even with all of this success, the team is continually looking for new ways to improve and at what their goals are for the future.

"We aren't very sure how far we're going to make it, but we're hoping to get to state this year, but we have to take it one game at a time." Lindley Kistler (11) said.

The team will be losing six seniors this year, and while the team is sad to be losing some of their closest friends, they do not believe it will be a major setback as a few of the team's best players will still be returning next year.

"I think that even after our seniors graduate, Homestead will always have a pretty strong basketball program." Grace German (12) said.

During practices, the team has been working on their defense. The team has been known to have very strong offense, but a main focus area this year has been minimizing the other team's scoring.

"If you can score a lot of points and not let the other team score a lot of points, that's a pretty shocking statistic." German said.

While an obvious goal for the future is to continue to move up the rankings within the state to third, second, or even first, this has not been the team's major long term goal. The girl's main goal is simply to continue to grow and see improvement and while doing that, moving up the rankings will hopefully be a result of all the team's hard work and determination.

> **"I think one of the things that doesn't really show up in the scorebook...is we've come together as a team more."**
> -Grace German (12)

"It's kind of neat to be state ranked, and have that notoriety, but our big issue was to win the NHC conference," Rod Parker, varsity head coach, said.

The team is not only proud of their accomplishments on the court, but off as well. The girls have grown strong friendships which have improved their teamwork immensely.

"I think one of the things that doesn't really show up in the scorebook or on any kind of plays, is we've come together as a team more," German said.

Most of the team not only plays for school but for travel as well. This has been a major contribution to the team's success as they have had time to practice during the school season, and off of the school season.

"We all played travel basketball over the summer," Kistler said. "We gained more experience and grew more mature so we could handle situations that we weren't able to handle last year."

In comparison to previous years, the team has been extremely successful in terms of state ranking and just overall playing. The team is hardworking and determined and it has produced major results.

"Well I think this is the most talented team that we've had at Homestead in my 14 years from top to bottom," Parker said. "There's a lot of depth on our team, a lot of talented players. It's a very hardworking group."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLISON CATTIN

Allison Cattin (11) faces another female boxer inside an Indiana gym. Cattin travels to spar with other girls in the sport from other cities. When there is a match, it can last from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Student boxer Allison Cattin (11) shares journey and experience in the unique sport

BY ETHAN YDE
Copy Editor

The Spartana got a chance to interview Allison Cattin (11) about her unique hobby. Allison enjoys boxing outside of school, and focuses on it as more than just a hobby. Her dedication to a sport that not many people from Homestead are involved in sparked our interest, and we got a chance to ask her a few questions about her sport and what it means to her.

Spartana: When did you start boxing and what got you into it?

Cattin: I started competitively freshman year, but I was around it a lot when I was growing up, because I grew up on military bases and we moved a lot.

My dad was like my best friend and he learned how to box in the Marine Corps., so he decided to teach me from a young age.

Spartana: Do you compete in any sort of league and how are the competitions structured?

Cattin: I compete on a team, but it's a very small team so my coach and I travel when we can, so that I can spar with girls in other cities. Matches are set up so you can spend all Saturday from 7 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon prepping and fighting. In tournaments you can only fight every 24 hours so it can be a month long during weekends, or it can be a week long every day.

Spartana: What is a typical practice like and how often do you train?

Cattin: Typical practices vary depending on what my coach feels I'm lacking. I train for one to three hours a day. Usually we spend the first half on cardio and kinesthetic and the second half on boxing: which could be shadow boxing, mitt work or heavy bag work.

Spartana: What are your specific goals for your future in boxing?

Cattin: I'm hoping to compete in the golden gloves in amateur and go (professional), maybe, after college.

Spartana: How do you hope to achieve your goals?

Cattin: I hope to achieve these goals through lots and lots of hard work and dedication, as well as trusting my coaches when they make major decisions for me. When I go (professional) I would like to find a new gym outside of Indiana to help improve myself even more.

Spartana: What inspires you the most to do well in your sport?

Cattin: My dad, my coach and my little brother all inspire me. My dad has always been there for me and I would like to make him proud. My coach is like my best friend and I look up to him so much for putting so many hours in as an athlete in and out of the gym.

I would never want to let him down. My little brother inspires me because I just want to be a good role model for him and a person he can look up to whether it be in life, academics or sports.

Spartana: How does boxing have an effect on your life?

Cattin: It has taught me so much about not only myself but the world around me. It has made me more confident, optimistic and just happier overall.

It made me realize doing anything in life requires heart, work and discipline. I've also learned that not everyone is going to support you or be on your side, and that's okay.

Spartana: What is the greatest lesson you have learned from your sport?

Cattin: There are so many lessons I've learned but the greatest one would have to be that to do anything in life, you have to do it wholeheartedly or else it is pointless.

You have to wake up every morning determined to chase your dreams if you want to get there. That, or don't talk smack in the ring because you'll get your jaw dislocated; I learned that one the hard way.

scholastic >> >>> key

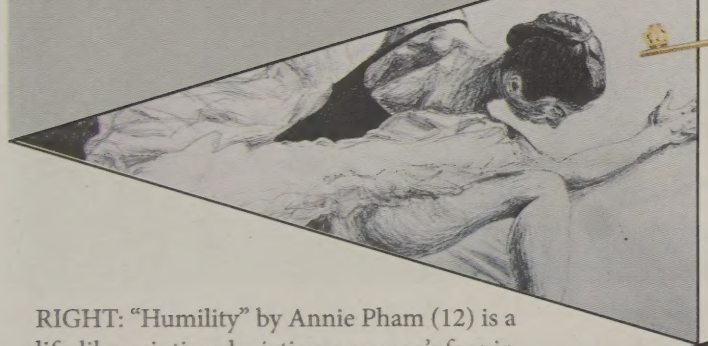
Each year, the Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards competition honors thousands of students around the nation. The organization receives over 200,000 original works annually, and Homestead is consistently awarded for its exceptional student art and writing.

The awards are presented by The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, whose mission is "identify students with exceptional artistic and literary talent and present their remarkable work to the world through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards." Students who receive a Scholastic award have exhibited the qualities of a promising artist or writer. Gold key recipients have the opportunity to receive a National Medal.

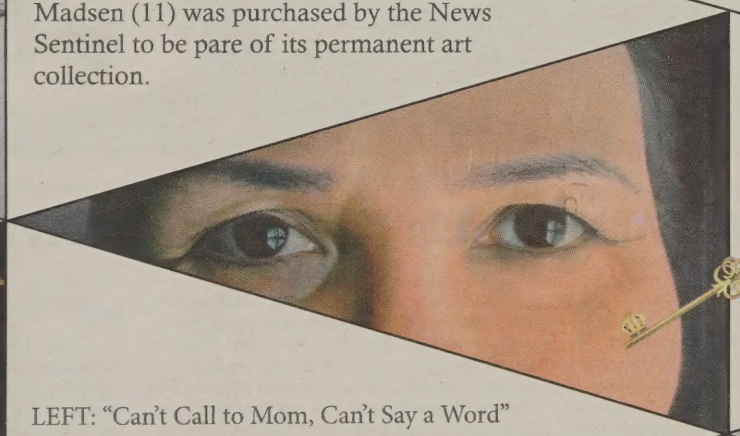
36 gold

19 silver

22 honorable mention



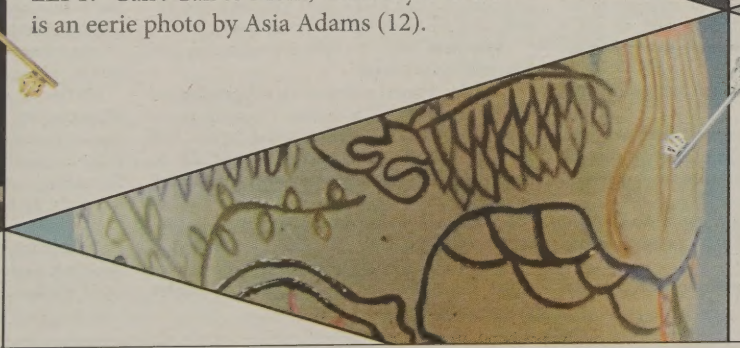
LEFT: "Arsonist's Lullaby" by Kiersten Madsen (11) was purchased by the News Sentinel to be pare of its permanent art collection.



RIGHT: "Humility" by Annie Pham (12) is a life-like painting depicting a woman's face in close detail.

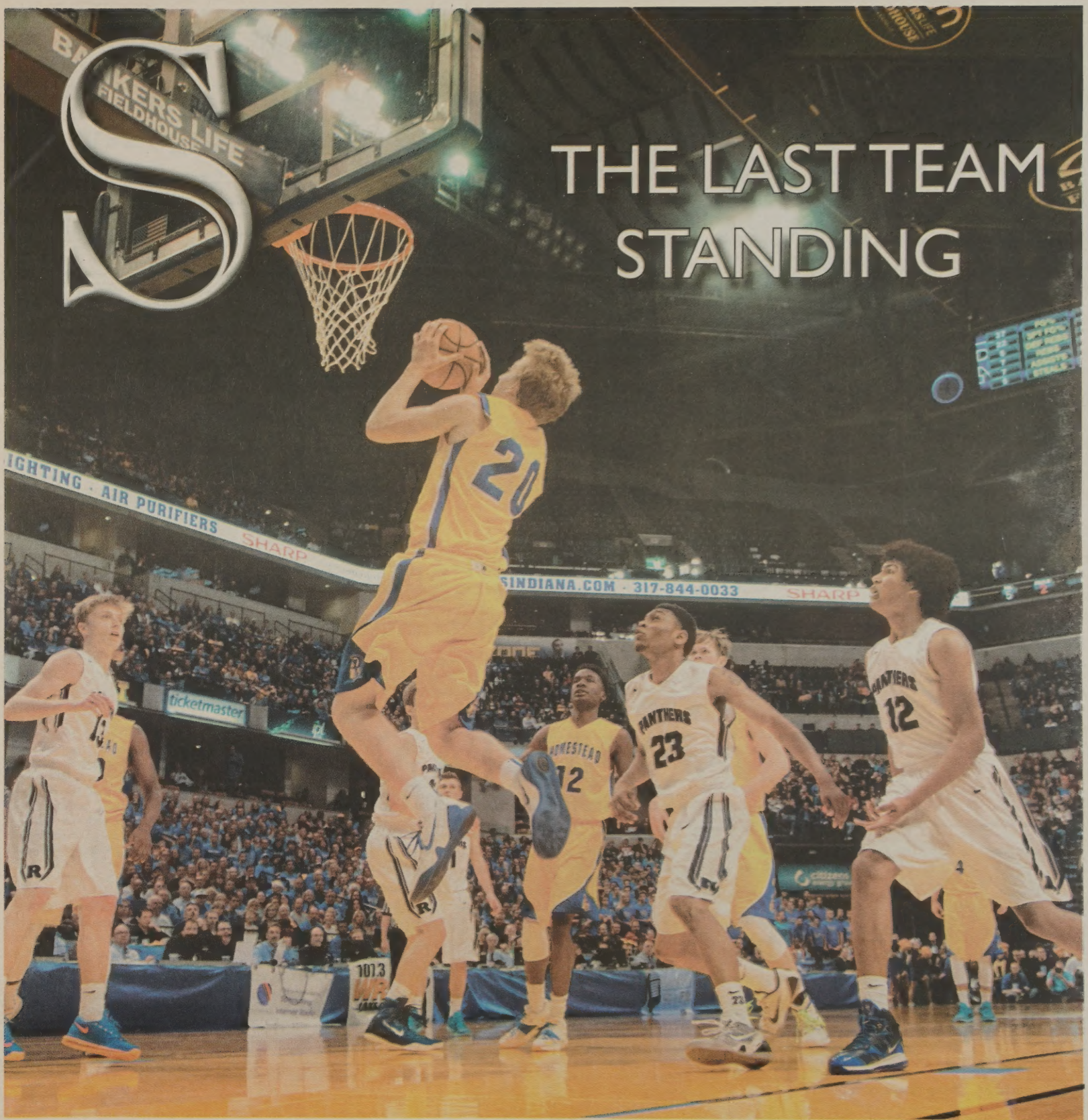
A special thank you to the art department for providing pictures of students' art.

LEFT: "Can't Call to Mom, Can't Say a Word" is an eerie photo by Asia Adams (12).



LEFT: A pot created by Milly Cai (12) featuring colorful, intricate detailing.

THE LAST TEAM STANDING



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the SPARTANA
STAFF & EDITORIAL POLICY 2014-2015

The Spartana is a monthly production of Student Publications: Newspaper at Homestead High School. Its purpose is to enlighten, educate, and entertain.

The Spartana has, and may continue to, operate as a limited open forum for the free exchange of ideas.

Staff members support the First Amendment in its entirety and oppose censorship in any form. The content of the paper is determined by the student staff. In cases of potentially controversial material, the Editorial Board will meet to decide the content of the newspaper. The staff will be assisted by the adviser in areas of professional ethics and legalities.

Material that is libelous or obscene as defined by Fort Wayne Newspapers or could cause a substantial and material disruption of the school day as defined by the Supreme Court will not be printed.

Southwest Allen County corporation encourages vigorous treatment of a wide range of subject matter, including controversial issues, and student journalists are free to report and to editorialize on events, ideas, and issues in their high school, community, nation, and world according to Policy Number 4150.

Public input will be accepted from the Homestead community in the form of letters to the editor. Letters must follow standards concerning libel or obscenity.

Those that could cause a substantial and material disruption to the school day will not be printed. Letters can be e-mailed to The Spartana at thespartana@gmail.com

Grading scale change will take effect next school year

New grading scale could give students more opportunities for scholarships

BY MICHAL SPANJER
News Editor

The Southwest Allen County school board has decided to change the district's' grading scale in order to make students' grade point averages (GPA's) fair in comparison to students from other schools. The adjustment will take effect in the 2015-16 school year.

On the current scale, a 90 is considered a B+, whereas on the new scale, a 90 is an A-. Each grade moves down percentage points on the scale, helping students who are on the edge of getting a higher grade push their grades up and raise their GPA's.

"There is a feeling that our kids were being disadvantaged when compared to other students for college scholarships and admissions to universities because our grade point averages were naturally lower than our peers because our grade scale was more difficult," Park Ginder, principal, said.

As a student, Brynn Devine (9) looks forward to the new grading scale as a way to compare herself equitably to students at other schools.

"(With the new grading scale), everybody gets an equal chance of getting into a college," Devine said.

The new grading scale will not change grades from previous years. For example, if a student gets a 91 in a class this year, his or her grade will not change from a B+ to an A- when the new scale takes effect in the fall.

Traci Murphy, geometry and algebra 2 teacher, understands the benefits of the change and the push to be on the "same playing field" with similar schools but has some concerns with some of the smaller implications it will have.

"The biggest drawback is we now have more students who are going to pass and (...) at the math level that is difficult because everything is so standard and mastery based," Murphy said.

It will now be easier for students who do not understand the material to move up a level before they fully grasp the concepts and foundation they need for the higher level class.

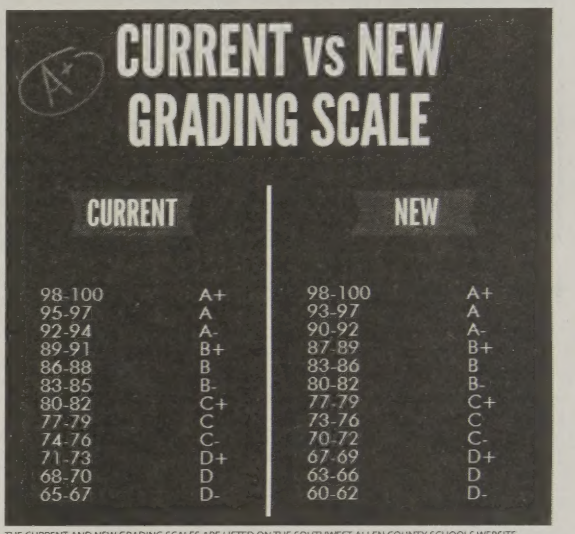
Devine also acknowledged the possibility of some students taking advantage of the new scale.

"I think the point of the previous grading scale was to make everyone work a little harder so now they will not feel like they need to work as hard," Devine said.

Ginder agreed that the purpose of the more challenging scale was to maintain a high level of expectation for students. However, he does not believe the adjustment will cause the expectation to lower.

"There is a concern any time you are inflating grades," Ginder said. He thinks some students will start slacking off slightly, but he does not think that will become a major issue.

Overall, students can take a sigh of relief knowing they have a safety net of a couple extra percentage points in terms of grades next school year.



THE CURRENT AND NEW GRADING SCALES ARE LISTED ON THE SOUTHWEST ALLEN COUNTY SCHOOLS WEBSITE

Preparation, studying in full swing for May AP tests

Upperclassmen advise students taking their first AP tests to study and stay calm

BY TESSA VIRGILLIO
Executive Editor

AP testing begins May 4, and freshmen to senior students have cracked the Princeton Review books. Hoping to absorb key concepts in order to pop a passing grade on the eminent exams, students raise their listening levels to their highest degree and shuffle review materials about in these preceding weeks.

> **"The teachers do such a great job that all I need to do to prepare is review, especially the things from earlier in the year."**
> **-Lindsey Musser**

"We're picking up all of the threads that we wove first semester, so it's all kind of coming back, because with biology there is a wide variety of information," Bekki Vail, life science teacher, said. "Although it seems like we were learning all types of different things, this semester is bringing everything back together."

Vail mentions how fortunate she is to have three weeks to review in her AP Biology class. This is due to the implementation and success of eLearning and Flex Days, so it was less hectic preparing for the unmoving AP test dates. However, even with last year's bumpy eLearning road, students achieved great numbers on the AP Biology test as a whole.

"Last year, 94 percent got a 3, 4 or 5, which was pretty awesome," Vail said.

Vail's preparation in class includes taking ten small-scale AP Biology tests, each containing half the number of free response and multiple choice questions students will find on the exam. Last year, Vail had her students take a test in the room the AP Biology test will be given in so that they could be familiar with the atmosphere.

"As hard as it sounds, try to keep up a good style of note-taking throughout the entire year," Madeline Klein (12), AP Biology student, said. "Having all of that to study when it comes down to about a month before the test will not only give you a sense of pride because of all the work you've done but also a sense of relief because reviewing will be that much easier."

Lindsey Musser (12), AP student, comments how, for her, difficulty does not increase with higher level AP classes but constitutes an inevitable natural progression.

"You're still learning, and obviously the work's getting more difficult, but because of where you're at, it's a progression just like you would move from seventh grade math to eighth grade math," Musser said.

Some students believe in order to obtain a 3, 4 or 5 on the AP exams one must "hard core study every day before the AP exam." In her preparation for AP testing, Musser has discovered aforementioned meticulous preparation is not necessary, and students must feel confident in what they have learned throughout the year.

"Our teachers do such a great job of preparing us that I don't feel the need to study, that's not saying that I don't study," Musser said. "The teachers do such a great job that all I need to do to prepare is review, especially the things from earlier in the year."

Maddie Doerffler (11) is going to be taking the AP U.S. History test and is glad she took this step towards her Academic Honors Diploma this year.

"AP shows me time management because there is a lot more work," Doerffler said. "It really makes you more organized. Doing the notecards helps and reading every night and not getting behind is extremely important."

Preparation is not all that has students stressing. A devastating shock to the AP Biology portion of the 2015 senior class is that the tradition of Senior Skip Day is nonexistent for those taking the exam. The AP Biology exam is scheduled for May 11, the Monday after prom. Normally, prom is scheduled for the next weekend following all AP exams. These students must reluctantly waltz in for an 8 a.m. start time, wishing they were just flicking on the TV to start *Friends* on Netflix.

"I recognize that senior skip day isn't exactly a rebellious act, but for once it would be nice to break free a little bit, to participate in a tradition with the rest of my friends, and to skip out on another day of work," Klein said. "When you're a senior, you feel like you've earned the right to do that. It doesn't feel very good to have to say, 'Oh well, guess I'll just have to miss it.'"

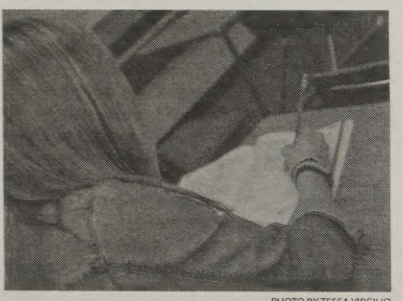


PHOTO BY TESSA VIRGILIO
Homestead student prepares to take AP test.

SHED SOME *light*

PHOTO BY EMMA LEININGER

Despite minor safety benefits, baseball stadium lighting, while cautionary, is not neccessary

BY EMMA LEININGER
Writer

The baseball field lacks one important component, field lights. The overhead stadium lights that are often overlooked in many baseball fields are obviously lacking in Homestead's home field.

The baseball field once had overhead stadium lights. Two of the lights were blown over in a storm and the money it would cost to replace them was too great a sum, around 9,000 dollars according to junior varsity Coach Shawn Harkness. Besides this, the other two light poles were very old and would probably need to be replaced as well. This would cost even more money than just replacing the original two. This also explains why the girls' softball field has the overhead stadium lights while the boys' baseball field does not.

Despite this, there are many benefits to stadium field lights such as a way to safely extend the beneficial use of recreational property. Especially during this time of the year, when it is still dark fairly early in the evening stadium lights would provide a light source for games that extend past the time of the sunset.

However, looking at the boys baseball team's current schedule, many games begin at 5:00 p.m. With the games lasting approximately three hours, the game should end at about 8:00 p.m. At this time there is still, minimal as it is, an amount of light left. This means that the lack of stadium lighting is not a major inconvenience.

Baseball season also starts around the same time as daylight savings time. This means that lighting is not necessarily needed, because daylight is extending later into the evening.

Lighting a baseball field can also be a very expensive amenity to have. Lighting a 300-foot radius baseball field, per game, can cost approximately $413.45, according to www.stma.org. Keep in mind this is only the electrical cost. The initial installation cost of the poles and light fixtures would be an additional fee.

Due to this, it is clear why administration would be hesitant to light a baseball field when the large stadium lighting is not a necessity. The boys rarely if ever play when the sun has completely set, so forking out money to produce something that will hardly ever be used is ultimately a waste of time and resources.

While some may view the somewhat dim lighting as an inconvenience or even an annoyance the money that is not being used for stadium lighting can stay in the school's budget and be used to support and fund other programs that lack the ability to do so themselves, instead of putting large sums of money towards field lights that do not have an extensive amount of use.

To ensure that games can be safely played in the case that the duration of the game extends past sunset, Homestead could begin games slightly earlier. This would give a time cushion that would be comforting to officials, parents and players. That extra bit of time would leave enough light so that viewers can see the game clearly, officials can make calls fairly, and players can play the game safely.

Self-love is a driving factor towards self-esteem

The attack on individuals for loving themselves needs to cease; let people be confident with who they are

BY KATIE MAHER
Opinion Editor

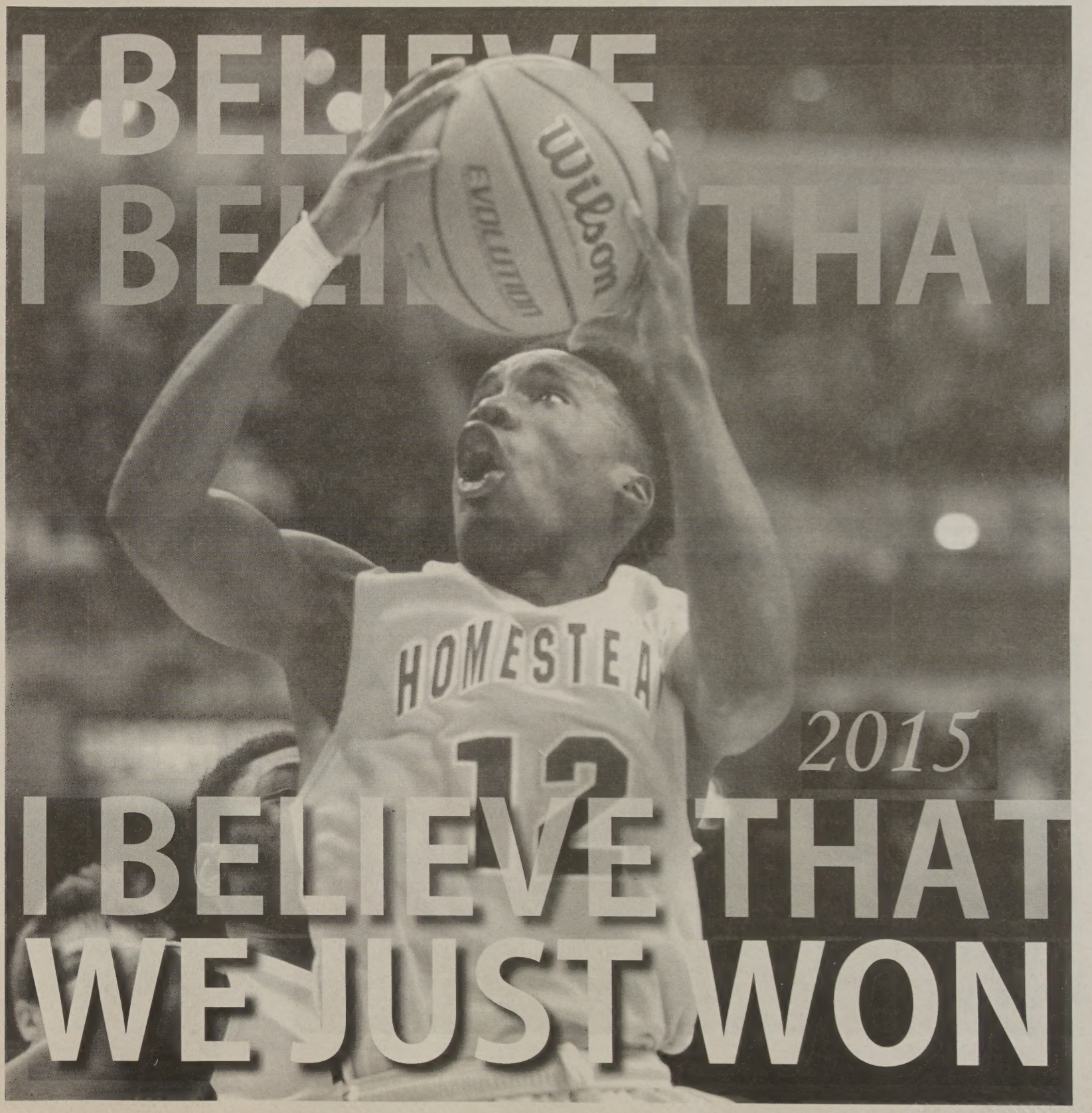
Truly loving oneself is not to be confused with some blatant form of narcissism; loving oneself is essentially a catalyst for unlocking one's highest potential and happiness in life, and has no reason to be sneered at by others

Especially with the popularity of the selfie, some critics will argue taking pictures of yourself to share with others online is a sign of either low self-confidence, or a pedestal to show off one's looks with an infatuated ego. What is ridiculous about these ideas are they are flagrant presumptions and negative judgments based on a medium where there is no actual way to analyze someone's "confidence" level, and both foundations do not need to be criticized whatsoever. Someone with low self-confidence maybe does not love themselves fully, and the last thing they need to hear is further rejection of who they are. The person with apparent high self-confidence has no reason as well to be condemned; people should not be shamed for loving themselves when self-love disperses no harm to others. What is continually upsetting about this triangle is when self-love criticizers have the focus set on themselves. Having to criticize others for loving themselves can be an indicator of deeper self-love issues of the criticizer. The criticizer might feel the need to throw remarks at others in order to feel significant. It sounds cliché, but there may be some truth to the saying, "you have to love yourself before you can love everyone else".

Also, loving yourself ultimately is a huge factor to reaching one's goals and highest potential. As Lucille Ball, actress, once said, "You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world". Obtaining a mindset where one knows and values their talents and attributes allows an environment where these gifts can be expanded. Consider that these thoughts become reality. For example, think about singer Beyoncé Knowles. Knowles is known for her confident, empowerment anthems such as "Single Ladies" and "Run the World (Girls)", and her attitude which radiates the same ideas popular from the songs. If Beyoncé did not love herself, she would not be the same person she is known as. There is a possibility there would be no Beyoncé if Knowles did not embrace herself, or if she had set limitations on herself due to how she viewed herself. A critical mindset where one does not love oneself might have thoughts such as "I am not good enough" or "I can't". Not only will happiness be an issue, but continually degrading thoughts can hold a person back.

To those who believe it is too late to find love for themselves after thinking a certain way for so long, do not give up. For a start, try making a list of attributes, both physical and not, and read it every day. The list might be short at first, but continue to add to it! Another tactic can be to explain to friends the intention of recognizing self-love, and ask if they can help add to the list. The "you can't love others until you love yourself" mantra can work vice-versa too, and serve as a powerful tool as well.

Self-love is not a problem; the problem is making individuals feel guilty of any expression of affection towards themselves. Once it is realized how important it is for every individual to admire themselves, there is no room to scoff at a selfie or outfit choice.


I BELIEVE
I BELIEVE THAT
HOMESTEA
12
2015
I BELIEVE THAT
WE JUST WON

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEN MIKESELL

Boys basketball triumphs for first-ever state title with impressive teamwork

BY KYLIE POLING
Editor-in-Chief

The Hoosier State is the basketball capitol of the country. Hoosiers live and breathe for March Madness, and in an area so dedicated to the sport, it is truly remarkable what the Spartans have accomplished. The Lady Spartans made their first state appearance against the Columbus North Bulldogs this past season, and not even a month later the boys played for their first state championship.

In an impressive display of athleticism, skill and team work, the boys won by a single point over the top-scoring team in the state, the Evansville Reitz Panthers. In the final two minutes of the game, the Spartans trailed by 8 points. Caleb Swanigan (12) scored two free throws, and instantly Ben Skowronek (11) stepped up and made some big plays defensively. Skowronek's plays allowed Tahj Curry (11) to make two major steals then score, tying the game at 73 and pushing the first ever overtime for an IHSAA Class 4A championship.

In the end, the score was 91-90, and the Spartans won their first state title in school history. Additionally, Dana Batt (12, right) won the Arthur L. Trester Mental Attitude Award for his mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability.

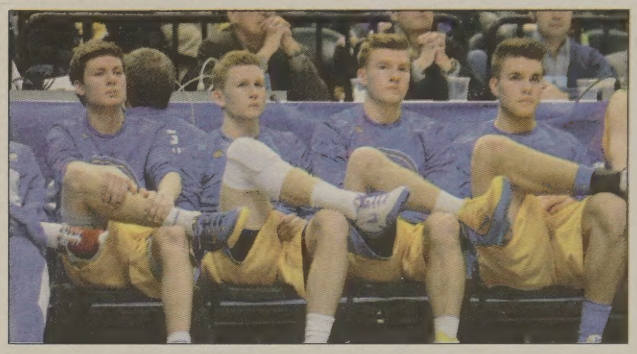
Congratulations, boys. I believe that we just won.

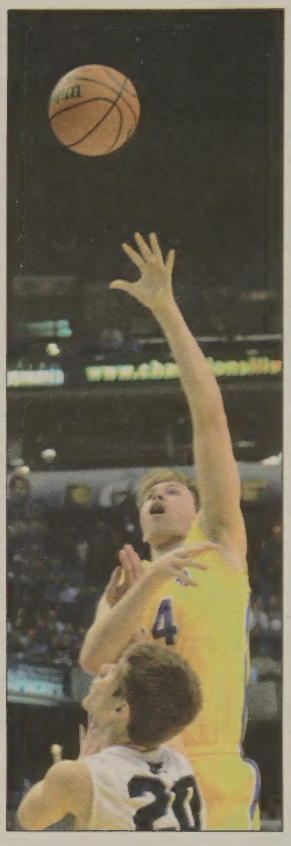
FINAL SCORE

91-90

Spartans Panthers

LEFT: Dana Batt (12) looks for scoring plays. Batt will be attending Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. Homestead was awarded a $1,000 scholarship in his honor by the Indiana Pacers and Indiana Fever. BELOW: Teddy Ray (12), Batt and Luke Cooper (12) enter the court to a crowd of over 12,800 at Banker's Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. RIGHT: Jordan Geist (12) goes to the net. Geist played with Grady Eifert (Bishop Dwenger,'14) on the national U19 All-Star Team at an invitational tournament in April in China.





TOP LEFT: Jake Wolfcale (11), Travis Lake (12), Gunnar Goebel (12) and Luke Cooper (12) watch the game. A few key members of the #BenchMob, they were pivotal in maintaining morale on and off the court. MIDDLE LEFT: Ben Skowronek (11) gestures to the crowd during a referee's call. BOTTOM LEFT: Caleb Swanigan (12) pushes the ball for a scoring drive. Swanigan 20 points. TOP MIDDLE: Dana Batt (12) reaches for a rebound. Batt scored 17 points and had 11 of the team's 44 assists before he fouled out with 3:20 left in the game, the score left at 67-58 with the Panthers leading. TOP RIGHT: Tahj Curry (11) tips the ball into the basket. Curry had two steals in the final seconds of the fourth quarter, which were set up by Skowronek. BOTTOM RIGHT: Chris Johnson, head coach, and Nick Ankenbruck, assistant coach, embrace following the conclusion of the game, ending with a record of 29-2.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEN MIKESELL

Swanigan named Mr. Basketball by the Indianapolis Star, verbally commits to MSU

BY KYLIE POLING
Editor-in-Chief

Prom Court nominee. Basketball center. State champion. Team USA gold medalist. Gatorade Indiana Player of the Year. Indiana Mr. Basketball. McDonald's All-American. Jordan Brand Classic All-American. Michigan State University commit.

By the looks of it, Caleb Swanigan certainly is quite accomplished. This past season, he averaged 22.6 points per game, totaling 704 points. During his three-year career as a Spartan, Biggie scored a total of 1,649 points, a school record. He averaged 13.7 rebounds per game, totaling 424 last season and contributing to an overall 1,048, also school records. Impressively, he also made 364 free throws and 625 field goals, which were also records. Biggie's career as a Spartan was not just about the numbers, though. It was about team work, and, ultimately, it was about winning a state championship. After all, that had been the goal all along.

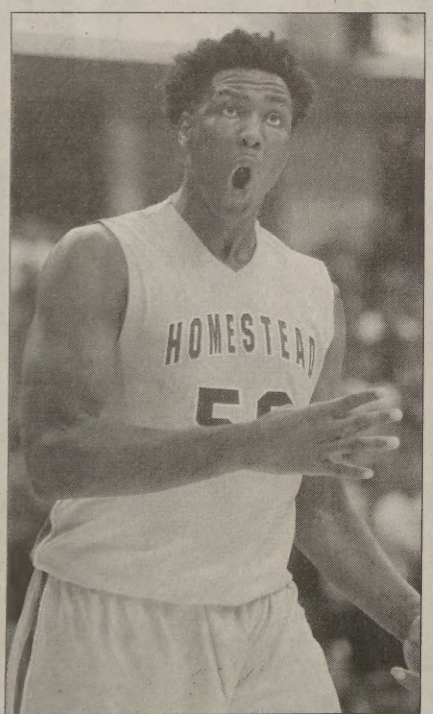
"Our goal every year is to win a state championship," Chris Johnson, head coach, said during team tryouts back in Nov. 2014.

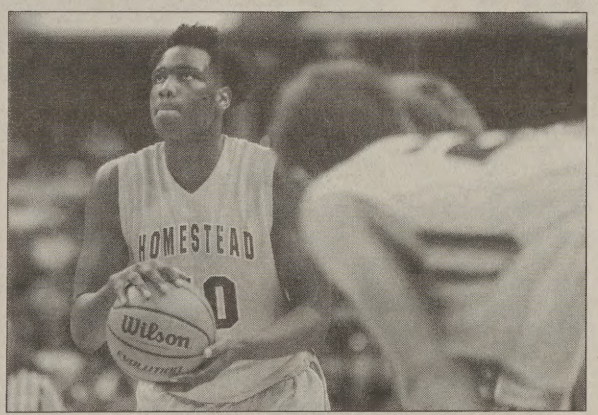
Now that the team has accomplished that goal, Swanigan can look to the future. The NBA is obviously his final destination, but first, number 50 will play at Michigan State University under the guidance of Tom Izzo, head coach.

"I'll have a lot of memories (of Homestead)," Swanigan said.

The school will have memories of him, too. From all-time scoring records to his 6'-9" presence in the halls, students will be hard-pressed to forget their friend Biggie. After all, Biggie puts it best: "Once a Spartan, always a Spartan." No matter where the world after high school takes students, each and every one has made their impact. Biggie happened to make a particularly big one.

Student. Athlete. Friend. Spartan.





"Next year I will be going Michigan State university. Once a Spartan. Always a Spartan"

@Biggs_Swanigan

9 on ESPN's Top 100 Class of 2015.

Healthy lifestyle important to wellbeing

Eating healthy and working out is hard, and we all know that. It takes every ounce of our beings to conjure up even the smallest filament of motivation to put down the donut, put on the workout clothes and hit gym. Working out and eating healthy, however, ensures some of the most rewarding and long-lasting benefits to a person's life.

If you are like me, then you probably get a little lazy at times and do not particular enjoy change. It is not easy stepping out of one's comfort zone and altering habits and ways of living. These changes, however, could be some of the best decisions anybody could possibly make in his or her lifetime.

Growing up, my ten-year-old self was not particularly concerned with what I ate and only requested was that it tasted good and it was not green. I often stuffed my face with waffles at my grandma's house after school and my grandpa treated us with McDonald's nearly every Friday. Looking back, it is no surprise I was a rather unhealthy child whose clothes were always a little snug.

AWBREI'S ANGLE

BY AWBREI VACHON
Life Editor

Let us get one thing straight: I am not going to lie and say I will not bash on fast food, because that is one of my intentions. However, I will admit that fast food typically does taste delicious and it is very cost-friendly, which are the obvious reasons behind why everyone in the world enjoys it so much.

Similarly, people of all ages swoon over chips, Little Debbie snack cakes, cereal and other processed delicacies, not knowing – or not caring – about all of the additives and preservatives that will negatively affect the body. There are ingredients in some of this food, such as corn syrup and high amounts of sodium, which only slow a person down and dehydrate him or her.

On top of that, people do not work out nearly enough. Most of us prefer to sit around and fall into the whole "an object at rest stays at rest" routine. It is my opinion that people are intended to be lean and fit, but unfortunately, human nature contradicts this. It seems that by nature we are a tad bit lazy.

Of course this is all easier said than done, but throwing out the processed food infested with hormones and preservatives and working out would be so much more beneficial. In a perfect world, the food industry would refrain from allowing society to consume such horrible toxins.

So with the summertime just around the corner, I am encouraging everyone to consider food labels. Be careful where you buy your meat from to make sure it is not full of hormones. Shred your own cheese to ensure better taste and unhealthy preservatives. Do yoga or workout. Drink lots of water. I promise living a healthy lifestyle will be worth it now and down the road.

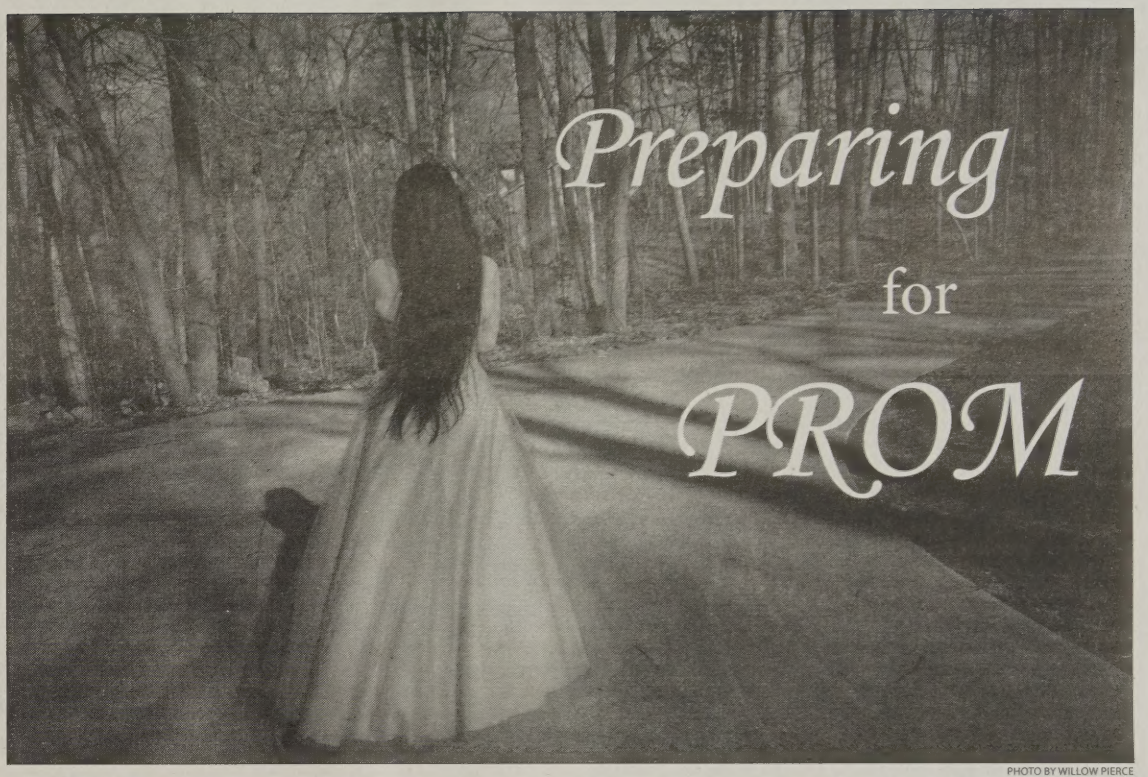


PHOTO BY WILLOW PIERCE

For girls going to prom, selecting their ideal dress and getting their hair and makeup done are the most exciting parts of the experience.

BY WILLOW PIERCE
Life Writer

Spring has finally arrived and it is buzzing with "Promposals" for the 2015 Junior/Senior Prom. Students have been preparing for this year's "Moroccan Mystique" theme at the Grand Wayne Center on Saturday, May 9 from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The student council expects this year's prom attendance to exceed 700 students, so it has prepared about 1000 tickets to sell at lunch. Besides purchasing tickets, students also have attire to take into consideration. During this time of year, dress shops are filled with glittering and sparkling dresses of different lengths, colors and fabrics. After finding the perfect dress, the ladies will set their minds on getting their hair and nails done, as well as going to the tanning bed.

"No one really cares about the dance, they just really care about dressing up and looking nice," Mallory Harker (11) said.

> **"No one really cares about the dance, they just really care about dressing up and looking nice."**
>
> **- Mallory Harker (11)**

The guys will complete needed tasks like renting a suit and tie to match their date's dress. Booking dinner reservations and picking out a corsage become high priorities this time of year.

Another exciting feature of Prom is the nomination of Prom King and Queen candidates. Soon after juniors selected six male candidates and six female candidates from their grade, the votes were tallied and the nominees announced. For Prom Queen, juniors Savannah Buck, Hannah Dickey, Kate Graney, Raechel Mullen, Sarah Zurawski and Blair Wills are in the running. For junior Prom King, Tahj Curry, Kevin Frebel, Sam Hagedorn, Thomas Herendeen, Eric Martin and Caleb Swanigan are in the running. Voting will take place after the candidates are aired on the announcements in a Prom feature. The 2015 King and Queen will be crowned on the night of Prom.

Though many girls look forward to prom, their dates are not quite as excited.

"It's expensive and overrated. For those girls dressed up on a daily basis they look the same," Gaetes McGloughlin (11).

While some students are going with dates, others are choosing to go with a group of friends. Those who would like to bring someone from another school must have a Guest Student form signed by the principal or administrator of the guest's school at least eight days prior to the dance. These forms can be found on the school's website under the students tab or in the student services office.

Students must bring a valid student ID to gain entry to the dance, as well as understand no alcohol or illegal substances will be permitted and inappropriate attire should not be worn. As May 9 nears, student excitement grows.

"I'm pumped about prom," Emily Hulbert (11) said.

Don't Forget!

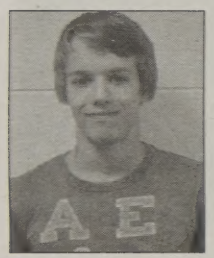
Student ID
Prom Ticket
No Illegal Substances

Summertime: more or less conditioning?

Summer conditioning is an important aspect of fall (and even winter) sports and is a primary focus for teams that are intent on starting the new season strong. There are many benefits and and some drawbacks to conditioning and staying in shape over the summer, but students should ask how much is too much and should remember not to only focus on intense training over the summer.

Every sport at Homestead is encouraged to participate in the summer SAS (speed, agility and strength) program hosted by the school, which, true to its intent, is beneficial to athletes participating in a sport the following year. Athletes can improve their game across the 18 sessions provided, but those three hours the program runs in the mornings can still be considered not enough. Several sports have separate training sessions in the afternoons, where athletes take another two to three hours to train on the same day. Eventually, this adds up to a lot of time that athletes must be conditioning so they're ready for the upcoming season.

'KOWSKI'S CORNER



BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Online Editor

For some people, the constant preparation for the impending season cannot always be done. I know many athletes who have jobs, family events or vacations during the summer and often cannot attend all of conditioning. Too many times, missing just a few sessions damages your reputation to coaches and could possibly affect your placement in the team come competition season. Many soccer players or football players can tell you that their work over the summer helped secure a better spot on the team, but if a player had to visit family or take a vacation, they might have had to choose to either sacrifice their own time or a good position in the team.

So is summer conditioning too intense for some people? A lot of times, players may be so tired that the constant training may actually be damaging, and once the season rolls around, they may already be burned out by over-preparation. Two-a-day practices that lead right up to the beginning of the season can take their toll, and perhaps it is better to just methodically train with a focus on the postseason, instead of risking fatigue during the season.

Summer conditioning can be done in several ways, and the methods for optimal training vary by sport, athlete and multiple other factors. It just depends on the person, so a sports program shouldn't define everyone by the same standards.

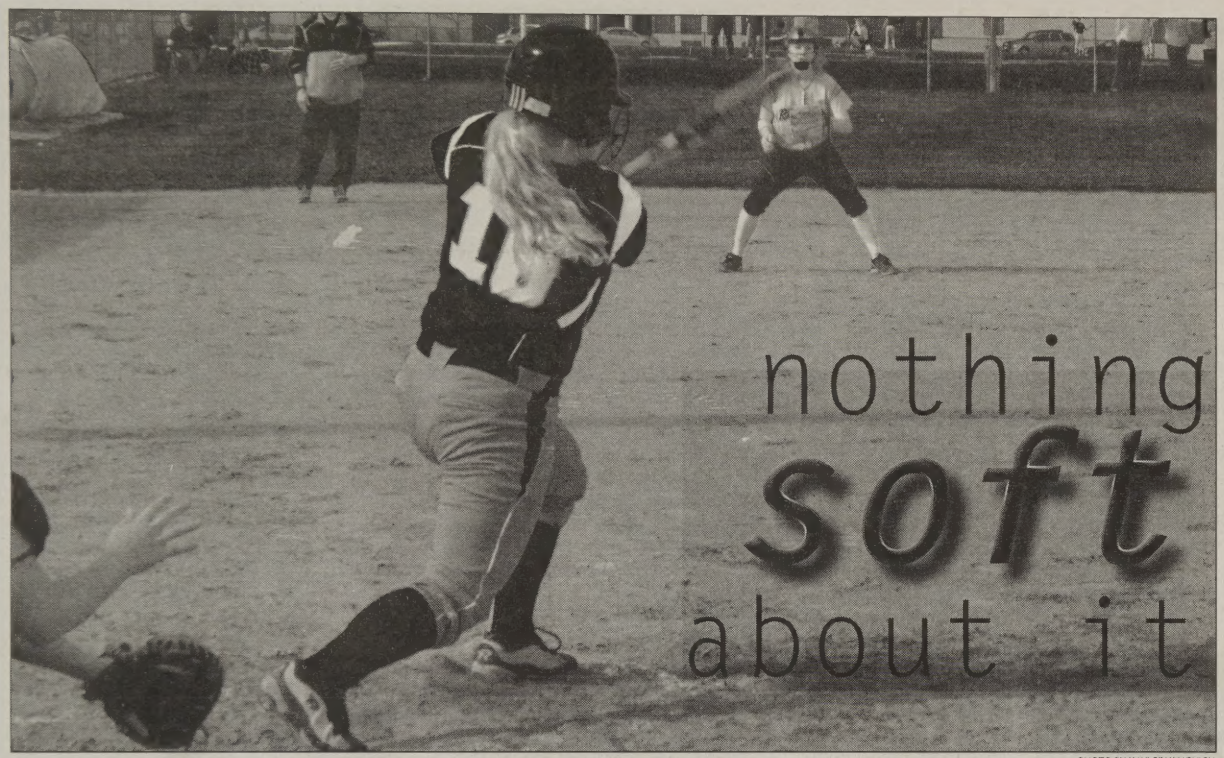


PHOTO BY KAYLEE YANOVICH

The varsity girls softball team opposes their rivals, and Madison Detweiler (11) swings with a resounding hit to left field. The team is undefeated.

Opening of softball season proves impressive, promising for girls

BY KAYLEE YANOVICH
Sports Editor

The softball team is off to a strong start, winning their first games of the season, many with a large gap between scores. The team attributes its success to its chemistry on and off the field, improving their performance in games and bringing them closer as a team.

"We're just going to work hard together all season, and bond on and off the field, and just work as a team to meet the one goal that we want to, which is win conference this year and go far in the state tournament," Katie Lael (10) said.

There is a wide age range on the team, many sophomores and juniors on the team as well as a few freshmen and of course, seniors. Although there is a small age gap between some of the girls, they all act like a family on and off the field.

Although the season started out pretty bumpy, the girls have won their first five games.

"It's taken us longer to get started," Tom Clagg, varsity head coach, said. "We were rained out or snowed out four games in a row before we got to play."

Lael is one of the sophomores, a catcher for the team. While some players may not favor this position, she loves it for a number of reasons.

"As a catcher I love how I'm always in the game and how I'm always involved, and how I'm the leader on the field," Lael said. "It's just a really fun position."

One game in particular the girls, as well as Clagg, are excited to play in is the game against Huntington North, as they have always been rivals. While winning this game in particular is one of their goals for the season, they are looking at a much bigger picture.

"We want to win as many games as we can, and hopefully go farther than we've gone before in tournament, so hopefully that goes as planned," Macie Johnson (10) said. "We're just going to keep facing better and better competition, and hopefully we'll keep progressing and do well."

> **"Most of the mistakes that people will make in softball are just mental errors and either when you're fielding or running the bases, it's all just mental."**
>
> - Macie Johnson (10)

The girls are very team oriented, always bringing each other up when they're down and motivating each other to do their best each and every game.

"You play as a team, you win as a team, and you lose as a team," Lael said.

The girls agree that the most difficult aspect of the sport is definitely the mental part of it.

"Most of the mistakes that people will make in softball are just mental errors and either when you're fielding or running the bases, it's all just mental," Johnson said.

Clagg explained how softball is different from baseball and the advantages of coming to a softball game versus a baseball game. Even if the girls do play fast-pitch, it is easier to see what's going on in the game compared to baseball, maybe because the fans are closer to the action or maybe because the balls are bright yellow. Whatever the reason, it's quite an entertaining game to come out and see.

"I really think that's a big positive with softball, you are right on top of the action whether you're in the dugout or in the stands," Clagg said. "You're so close that you're almost part of the activity."

Varsity baseball team off to great start, predicting successful season

BY ARIKA AKIN
Writer

The baseball team's record is 6-2, and it is off to a promising start. The team has beaten IHSAA Class 2A sixth-ranked Canterbury once and 2A top-ranked Wapahani twice, and also beat Blackhawk Christian April 20 during a game at Parkview Field.

"I feel like we have a real good shot to make it far once playoffs start," Ben Schwartz (12) said.

With only five seniors, the team is relatively young; however, the many experienced juniors play vital roles in the team's dynamic. Many of the players have been playing baseball for years, and are planning on continuing to play into the future.

"I've been playing since I was probably three or four, just in my backyard," Drew Lunsford (11) said. "It's been an important part of my life, and will continue to be even when I'm no longer playing."

The team hopes to improve on everything, but believes that they have improved on pitching the most. "We lost one or two impact pitchers from last year's team, but several juniors and sophomores seem determined to fill those roles," Lunsford said.

In a game where players hit out half of the time, "there are always times that you get mad, but that is why baseball's fun," Luke Wilcox (10) said. "You learn from what you did wrong and use that to improve and not make the same mistake again."

The players are working on improving themselves and others, focusing during offseason on their overall athleticism and strength, as well as working on their batting.

Last year the team won sectionals against Huntington North, but lost regional semifinals to Noblesville. This year, the hope to make it to state championships.

"I think we should do pretty good the rest of this season," Wilcox said. "Our goal would be state championship, but we have a lot of work ahead of us to reach that goal."

Potential is the foundation for a team, but hard work is what leads to success.

"We've got a lot of potential so I'm looking forward to see how we improve this season," Nicholas Byall, varsity coach, said. "We always need to improve our team."

However, baseball is not all about the wins. In the close-knit group of students who love to play the all-American sport, the focus is on bonding and moments of pride about themselves and their team.

"I think that's what we enjoy seeing more than the wins: the group of guys getting together and bonding," Byall said.

The team took a trip to Vincennes, IN over spring break.

"Just traveling with the team, you get to know the guys a lot better, and I'd say that's so far that's been the best part is just getting to know the group, it's a good group of guys," Byall said.

Bonding is just one aspect of creating a winning dynamic on the team.

"My favorite moment with this team this year would have to be the triathlon we performed in the hotel during spring break," Lunsford said. "It was something new and fun, but also brought out the competitiveness in our players in a non-baseball situation. Everyone seemed to have a lot of fun."

Joining the sport is a large commitment, as practices are often held after school for hours, and can interfere with homework and schedules; however, some players argue the sacrifice is worth it.

"Relationships that are created through athletics are ones that might last a lifetime," Lunsford said.

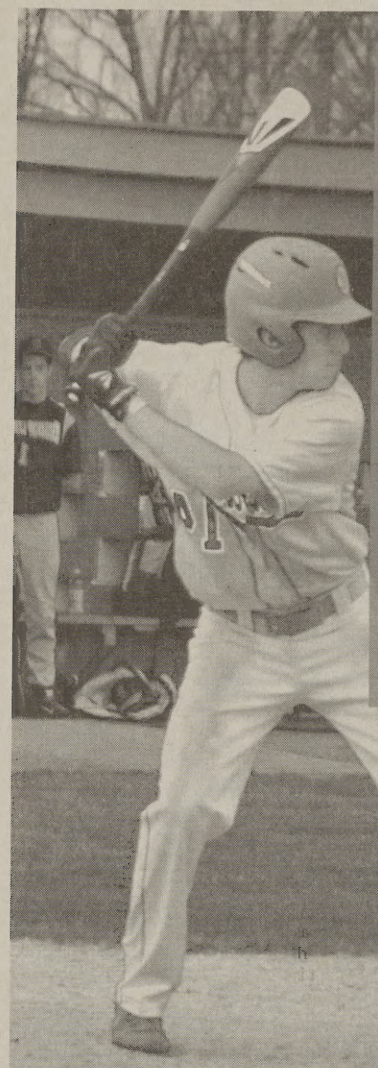


PHOTO BY ALEXIS JORDAN

"Traveling with the team, you get to know the guys a lot better, and I'd say that's been the best part."
- Nicholas Byall, Coach

Past Proms

Prom is coming up fast and while all the juniors, seniors, and lucky underclassmen get ready for their big night, teachers look back on some great memories of their own.

Kara Squires, social studies teacher, and friends in 1994.

"I think for a lot of people it was friends and romance," Nancy Rogers, French teacher, said.

Sarah Jones, art teacher, with her date in 1999.

Jim Schimdt, social studies teacher, with his date in 1969.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOMESTEAD TEACHERS

Cindy Husar, art teacher, in 1985.

Nicole Detter, media specialist, in 1987.

David Price, English teacher, with his date in 1978.

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Girls track wins sectionals

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STAFF & EDITORIAL POLICY 2014-2015

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The Spartana has, and may continue to, operate as a limited open forum for the free exchange of ideas.

Staff members support the First Amendment in its entirety and oppose censorship in any form. The content of the paper is determined by the student staff. In cases of potentially controversial material, the Editorial Board will meet to decide the content of the newspaper. The staff will be assisted by the adviser in areas of professional ethics and legalities.

Material that is libelous or obscene as defined by Fort Wayne Newspapers or could cause a substantial and material disruption of the school day as defined by the Supreme Court will not be printed.

Southwest Allen County corporation encourages vigorous treatment of a wide range of subject matter, including controversial issues, and student journalists are free to report and to editorialize on events, ideas, and issues in their high school, community, nation, and world according to Policy Number 4150.

Public input will be accepted from the Homestead community in the form of letters to the editor. Letters must follow standards concerning libel or obscenity.

Those that could cause a substantial and material disruption to the school day will not be printed. Letters can be e-mailed to The Spartana at thespartana@gmail.com

Panning recognized with Teacher of the Year honor

Teacher known for enthusiasm in class and quadratic formula song awarded

BY MICHAL SPANJER
News Editor

Students and staff at Homestead know David Panning, Algebra I and II teacher, for his enthusiasm and unique approach to teaching. Given that he uses any measures it takes to reinforce a math lesson, such as singing a song about the quadratic formula, it comes as no surprise to his current and former students that he received Teacher of the Year this year.

"(Mr. Panning) is one of my favorite teachers because he's so enthusiastic and he really likes to try and get his students to participate by making (his lessons) funny," Allison Layson (9) said.

Panning was humbled by the award, but had mixed feelings when he found out he was receiving it.

"It feels good to be recognized by your peers," Panning said.

Panning acknowledged other teachers at Homestead who he felt were equally apt for the honor of Teacher of the Year.

"In some ways I was ashamed (to receive this award) because I know there are so many good teachers and so many people who I feel are so deserving of that recognition, and to have that recognition fall on my shoulders and not on their shoulders doesn't seem fair," Panning said.

Though he was nominated for Teacher of the Year by his fellow teachers, only his students and former students have seen first hand the enthusiasm he exudes during class and know what goes on during the secret Pi Day celebration he hosts every year on Mar. 14.

"He likes to engage the students in a lot of activities and he makes it a lot more fun than the other (math) classes," Layson said.

Panning finds creative ways of teaching math, such as searching videos on YouTube to put on My Big Campus of other teachers explaining the lesson or creating a song to help remember a formula. He also bounces ideas off other math teachers at Homestead and believes he has "improved a lot by looking at other people" and incorporating their teaching methods while adding his own twist.

"One of the things that I've realized is kids see the work you put into something," Panning said. "If they see you are enthusiastic about what you do and actually enjoy it, then they tend to enjoy it."

Panning's dedication toward making sure students understand the material pays off. His students are appreciative of the way he gives reinforcing math lessons his all.

"He is pretty devoted to making sure that ninth graders are understanding what they are doing," Brett Kaminski (10), a former student of Panning's, said.

Panning's personality is the impetus of what makes his students eager to learn. "He definitely has that cool, fatherly kind of personality," Kaminski said. "He was understanding, like whenever I was having trouble (...) he helped me through all that."

The best part of teaching for Panning is getting to interact with his students, and knowing he has had an "impact on other people's lives" means even more to him than being recognized with an award.

"I think more important than getting Teacher of the Year is when you get a note from a student at the end of the year," Panning said. "The student will tell you, you know, 'Thanks for being my teacher,' and for whatever you did that was a little bit extra that made them feel like you supported them."

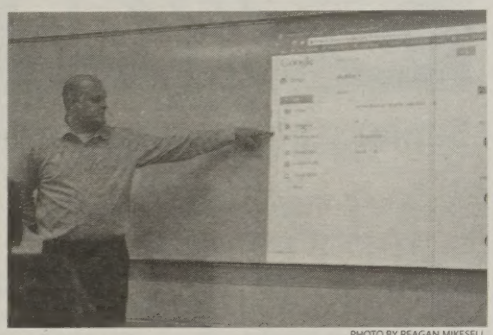


PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Dave Panning uses Google Docs during math lesson.

Students liberated from strict summer reading lists

Teachers assign more options of books to read over summer than years past

BY ARIKA AKIN
Writer

Summer reading for the 2015-2016 school year, unlike the summer reading of this school year, contains more than one choice of which book to read. Students who are going into nine, 10, 11 or 12 grade literature classes have a choice of a variety of books, with several topics and genres, all of which can be annotated for a common theme.

"I like that we have a choice in what books we want," Tiffany Poydras (9) said. "But it seems like it will be complicated to read in class."

Discussing and incorporating the books into class may be difficult because each student may read a different book. "It would be hard to have a discussion if everyone picked a different book, you'd only have like one or two people reading that book. Maybe we could talk about the general themes that tie the books together, that would be interesting," Tara Olivero, English 10 and Honors English 10 teacher, said.

In any case, the books will be used in class, but students will not be quizzed over the material.

"There isn't going to be anything like a test or really super formal, when people walk in but they will be doing some basic assignments, response and discussion, over what they read. The hope is that throughout the course of the year we can continue to make connections back to that summer reading," Erin Tembras, English 12, Composition, and Credit Recovery teacher, said.

> **"The hope is that throughout the course of the year we can continue to make connections back to that summer reading."**
> **Erin Tembras**

Summer reading is used to encourage students to read independently and to encourage literacy.

"It's just good that students are reading something, to kind of build the culture of reading, and promoting, finding something that you enjoy," Olivero said.

"You should try to read things that catch your attention more than anything else, because any reading that you're doing is gonna be beneficial for the end," Tembras said.

Even without school-implemented reading over the summer, many students continue to read on their own, choosing whatever interests them.

"I'd consider myself a pretty good reader. I usually, when I get really into a book, read it like nonstop for several days and then it's done and that makes me sad, and I don't read for a while," Grace Nickeson (10) said.

Some students do not have much time in between their activities for relaxation and pleasure reading, but still try their best to squeeze it in. "I'm actually a pretty avid reader, when I have time. I don't have much time anymore with theatre and schoolwork, but when I do have time, I can read through a 500 page book in maybe a day and a half," Emma Poor (10) said.

Allowing students a choice of what book to read, even though the books are chosen by the school, helps.

"I like the idea, because it makes it easier to pick a book that you would enjoy, instead of reading the same one as everyone else," Ally Geoffray said. "Reading gets everyone on the same page, ready for the upcoming class, and it has one topic to discuss in class."

However, not all summer reading lists have choices. Students who are going into AP Literature and Composition are reading two books, A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy.

Summer reading is important, both to simply encourage students to read, and to prepare them for the next school year. Due to the many choices of books, students can read what interests them, and read the books for themselves, not just because they are required by the school.

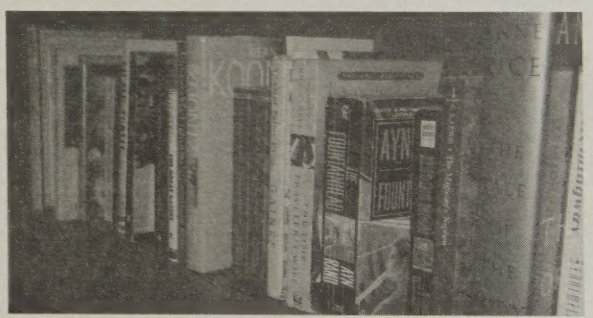
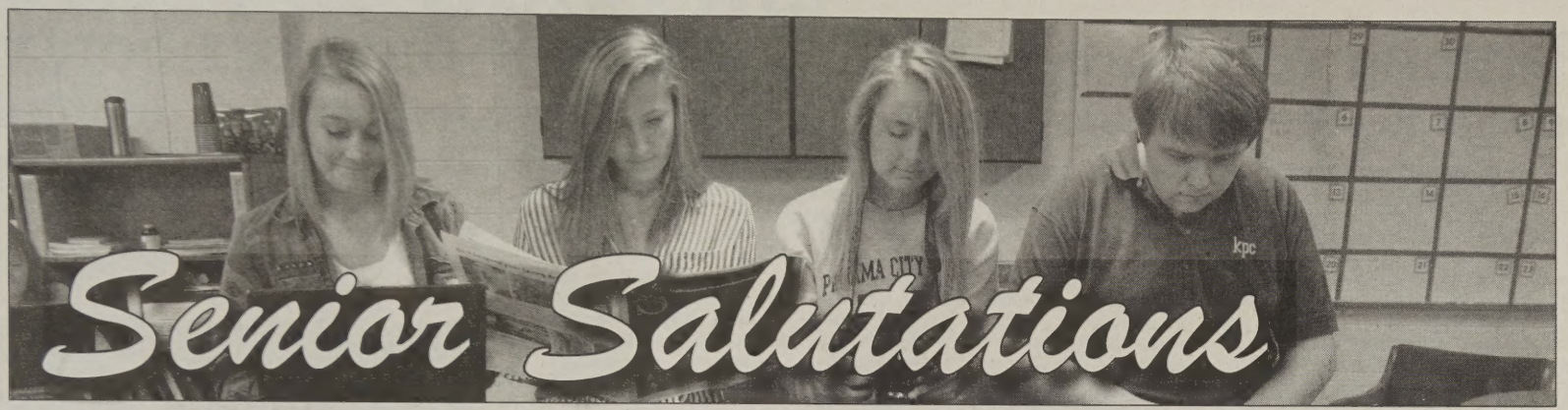


PHOTO BY LAUREN BOND

Students can choose from a variety of books to fulfill their required reading.



Senior Salutations

PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Senior staff members remember and reflect upon their tenures as journalism students

BY KATIE DUNALP
Former Editor-in-Chief

When I first entered high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I wasn't good enough to play sports, I wasn't musically or artistically inclined, and I didn't have any real talents that made me stand out in the sea of freshmen. By my sophomore year, I knew I had to try something, so I signed up for something I thought I could be good at: Journalism. On the first day of my junior year, I walked into the newspaper room as the News Editor, having absolutely no idea what the title meant or what I was supposed to do. I've always been shy, so interviews made me nervous, I had no experience with setting or enforcing deadlines, and I was generally terrified of messing up. To my surprise, I found something that I not only thrived at, but really enjoyed. I have learned so many things through my time on The Spartana. Not only do I now know more about designing a newspaper than I ever expected, being on the staff, and more importantly in a leadership role, has taught me a lot about responsibility and problem solving. I've learned it's ok to mess up sometimes and no issue is ever going to turn out exactly as planned. But most importantly, I've learned there are a lot of really talented people in this school.

Over the span of my involvement with The Spartana, we have had multiple advisors. Mr. Kuhn, longtime advisor, retired halfway through my sophomore year, leaving Coach to be our sub for the rest of the year. There was a lot of uncertainty about our next advisor, but we were lucky enough to get Amanda Eid. Not only did she help guide me when I started the year as Editor-in-Chief, once again not really knowing what I was doing, but she was a friend. After the first semester of my senior year, Miss Eid announced she was leaving, and we were again thrown into uncertainty. Though we expected very little from our next advisor, we ended up with Mrs. Nowak, who has provided a fresh perspective and made the transition easy for all of us. Through all of the different advisors and changes, the constants have been the people around me.

The Spartana is a very diverse group of people from all grades and interests. It's a group which probably wouldn't be friends if not for the newspaper, and I am so grateful I got to be a part of our odd and dysfunctional family. Wandering the streets of Boston or distributing the paper would not have been half as fun without all of you. I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished and excited for the future of the paper. As a freshmen, I never would have imagined myself being on the newspaper, and I never would have imagined all that we could accomplish together as a staff. Here's to the good memories, the stress and mini crises, and most importantly, the future.

BY JESS TEBBEN
Former Life Editor

Anyone who knows me knows I'm quite prone to having existential crises. It's kind of scary when you realize how small you are in the grand scheme of things. You are one person in a world of seven billion. You exist on a planet that is part of an infinite space. But I'm not here to preach to you about astrology and the meaning of life; I'm here to tell you about journalism.

When I began my journalism journey, I was adamant about getting away with doing nothing but email interviews for my entire career in media. I was successful, I think, for my sophomore year when I had to write about sports (a subject I know next to nothing about) and had to interview widely-known and intimidating upperclassmen. Mostly, my source was Facebook. If it wasn't Facebook, it was an "I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm on Spartana…" text message. Admittedly, I was kind of the worst journalist ever.

But I think the thing that makes the biggest difference in any experience – and especially mine in journalism – is the people you are surrounded by. Junior year was undoubtedly my hardest year of Spartana, but it was also my favorite. The only thing that kept "I hate Spartana," and "Why do I have to write two stories every issue," from coming out of my mouth daily were the people I got to interact and laugh with. Of course, sacrificed class time meant more late nights and panic attacks, but it was worth it. And, of course, I owe a lot of my change-of-heart to Amanda Eid, the adviser who pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me feel like I was exactly where I was supposed to be. It's nice to know people who believe in you. It's even better to know people who think you're as funny as you think you are.

Writing this is bittersweet. There have been so many changes already this year that ending now would feel wrong, like I'm leaving a painting unfinished. But I'm also looking forward to seeing everyone on staff next year perfect what we started this year. It's been quite a rocky journey, but I think we've proven that things always work out.

I guess what I'm trying to say is it's kind of easy to forget how small you are in the grand scheme of things when the publication you worked so hard on is called for first place in "Best in Show," or when you walk into a room filled with people who care about you and make you feel important. I felt like I was part of something so much bigger in Spartana, and that was actually pretty awesome. I'm Jess Sayin'.

BY COLBY SHOUP
Former Multimedia Manager

The other day I received a poorly written letter transcribed on wrinkled notebook paper.

"Dear future self," it said, "Stop being so shy and reserved all the time. You'll have a lot more fun if you open up more and stop living in your own world."

I wrote that to myself in 8th grade, and it's still just as relevant now.

I also said something about how I couldn't wait for shows like "Glee" and "The Big Bang Theory" to get "even better." That's much less relevant now. I had a complete lack of taste in middle school.

But middle school isn't important right now, let's talk about high school. As a culture, we're obsessed with defining what exactly high school is about.

This is hard to do because (unlike movies about high school) there's no underlying themes, no consistent cast of supporting characters and no guaranteed character arc. People don't always change or grow as people, but as a rule, they tend to feel like they do.

I think that's why it's important to differentiate between growth and self-realization. Self-realization is when you realize how much of a jerk you are whereas growth is when you actually try to do be a better person after realizing you're a jerk.

We feel like we're different once we realize we're flawed, but that's only how we begin to change. While people do grow in high school, looking back, it's a lot more about self-realization. In other words, high school isn't about becoming an adult, it's about figuring out what kind of adult you want to be and figuring out what you can do to become that person.

In these last four years, I've figured out a lot of things about myself, the most important thing being that I should probably listen to my middle school self more (except when it comes to TV shows).

High school is incredibly contradictory. It's chocked full of wonderful things like discovering your passions, but it's also full of tragedy and constant anxiety about your future. The bad things are inevitable, but the positive parts of high school can only really happen if you let people into your life.

Don't be the awkward kid in the back of the class who lives in his own little world. I've done that before and it's not worth it. So share your own little world with everyone else, you jerk! You'll be glad that you did.

End of the school year does not mean end of education

Summer courses offer benefit of less stressful learning environment and opportunity to get ahead

BY KATIE MAHER
Opinion Editor

School is winding down to an end, but numerous classes are about to start up. A reality for several high school students is a summer with textbooks and tutoring; even preparing for AP classes for the fall semester. After further realization, summer can actually be the greatest time to learn of all.

Deciding to continue studies during the summer months is reasonable and beneficial, for the outcome is always for a student to get ahead; regardless of if the reason to take the summer course is a make-up or not. Summer is the perfect time to retake a class if the student finds doing so necessary, since the added stress of seven class periods is nonexistent. The stigma that those who attend summer classes after failing needs to be marginalized. One student could have had a difficult time personally during the school year, which led to a lower grade. Another feasible situation, a teacher may not have taught the material in a fashion which accommodates the student's way of learning. A reality, although parents roll their eyes at the idea, the teacher may have been a bad teacher. Or even, the student needs more time to comprehend the course material. Failing is not always a sign of stupidity nor, should those students be criticized in the eyes of others for trying again. One course does not measure a student's full intellectual capability. Remember, even kids that did pass every class the last school might opt to take classes during the summer. Education is a continuing process, and students, on both ends of this spectrum, are academically moving ahead.

Of course, there are students who view summer as a "no-stress time", and it should be. But try not to avoid a summer class just to maintain no-stress! Remember online classes especially can be void of headaches, and can be done at a student's own pace. Always remember to consider the benefits as well. Summer gym is extremely popular among high school students. The course is only two weeks, and opts the semester-long torment gym has to offer. Likewise, a student who develops a sick stomach thinking about an entire semester in an economics class at school can finish the class in one month. Summer classes are truly a way to lessen future stress and pain. Say a student knows he or she will be in AP World the next year. The student can flip through a review book, and familiarize with the material for the upcoming school year. This does not even have to be done on a daily basis. Even though students might not overtly admit this, summer can become boring. On one of those days or instances, whip out the review book! There is no possible way to go wrong continuing to study over the summer.

Education throughout the summer months can extend far beyond requirements for the high school's graduation plan. School is not by any means the only place to learn. If an individual enjoys pottery or how a website is made, he or she should do not be afraid to expand on those interests just because of summer.

Largely, summer classes, or any form of education during the summer, should be seen as nothing but beneficial. If interested in enrollment for an online course, or any summer education program, look at the possibilities with counselors. If there is an interest one would enjoy which schools do not offer, go for it. The liberation and stress reduction the summer has to offer makes the world the greatest classroom of all.

Summer School Is Cool

Benefits of summer school include the opportunity to earn credits and get ahead on the road to graduation.

Necessity of finals if course already offers ECA or AP test

While overwhelming, final exams are frustratingly necessary in order to assess students' final grade

BY EMMA LEININGER
Writer

Finals week is a stressful time as it is, but when you add AP tests and ECAs in the weeks prior to finals, this time of the year can be the most overwhelming for many students. The question is often asked, if students take an AP test or an ECA, do they really need to take the final as well?

While the AP tests and ECAs cover most if not all the material learned throughout the year, in many cases, the assessments are not taken into account for the final grade in the class. This means that finals are frustratingly necessary to fully examine your knowledge and understanding of the courses one is taking.

> **"About 20.1 percent of all public high school graduates received a three or higher on the AP tests."**
> www.collegeboard.org

Also, while we would like to think that we are going to study strenuously to get that three, four, five or pass plus on our AP test or ECA, the ultimate reality is, we most likely aren't. This means that if the AP test or ECA were taken as a final grade, the student's grade in the class would suffer.

The AP tests and ECAS are beneficial for gauging college readiness and fulfilling graduation requirements, but when contributing to the fate of your grade in a specific class they should not be taken into consideration.

About 20.1 percent of all public high school graduates, those who took and did not take AP tests, receive a three or higher on the AP tests, according to www.collegeboard.org. A three is the minimum score a student can get in order to be considered eligible, or "acceptable" for college credit. If a 3 is a "pass," only about 20.1 percent of students would earn a passing grade for a final score if an AP test were to count as a final.

Final exams also teach students important life lessons. According to www.psychologytoday.com learning how to properly study and pass a final exam is an important skill to master, as many colleges and undergraduate programs rely on final exams in order to determine your grade in that course.

When students are successful when taking final exams, this gives them the necessary skills to perform well beyond undergraduate work and the self-confidence that will help relieve the stress of exams.

Beyond the burden of final exams, they provide many benefits that will help you out in life. While it may not seem like it now, those tedious and stress provoking tests are actually advancing you as a student and as a person in the long run.

The removal of final exams may not be in the near future, but as students we do have the power to create a less stressful environment for the tests. Remember to study hard and manage your time wisely, you may find that those final exams are not too overwhelming after all.

Teachers have the ability to help too. If a class has an ECA or an AP test, instead of adding a final exam, teachers could consider doing a final project. This may not seem like a better alternative, but when students have an extended amount of time to put hard work into a final grade, there will most likely be better results and less stress for the students.

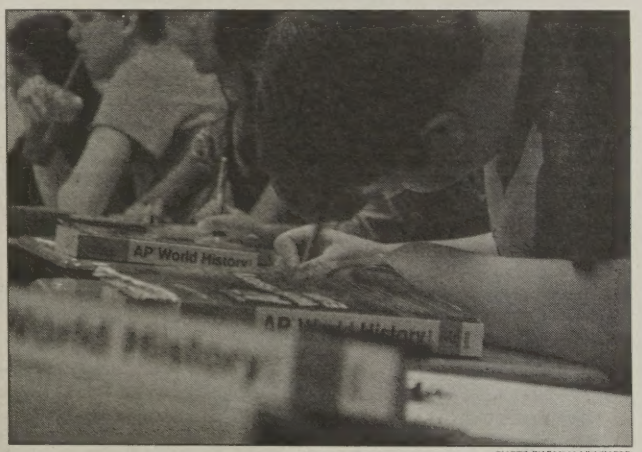
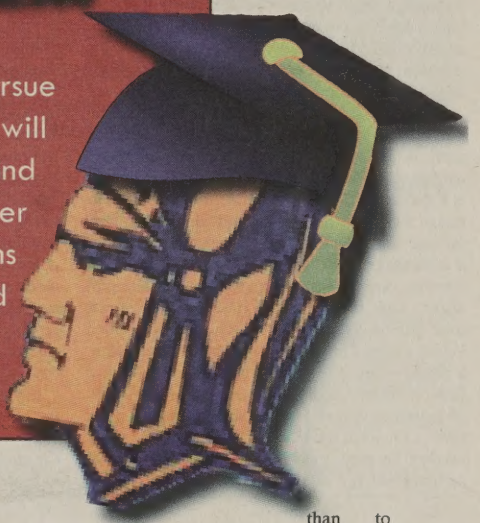


PHOTO BY EMMA LEININGER
Wesley Davis (9) at AP World History test review in Sarah Wyss' room Thurs. morning.

Beyond Homestead...

The 2015 senior class will be parting with the student body to pursue life after high school, traveling near and far. While many students will arrive at colleges and universities in the fall, some graduates will find solace in an alternate path, such as a gap year consisting of volunteer work or travelling abroad. The diverse breadth of students' passions and interests that exists withinHomestead is embodied in these featured students.



BY TESSA VIRGILIO
Executive Editor

In the fall of 2015, high school seniors around the country will set foot on the campus in which they will start a new chapter of their lives. Exiting the doors of a school of around 2,000 students and entering those of one exceptionally larger or smaller is a shift for these students, and many are anticipating every second of it.

Sang Jun Park (12) will be attending Columbia University of New York, a college planted in the nave of networking and bustle. This, Park expresses, is a prime location for taking an individual to new heights and for establishing links and connections.

"I am just excited to meet new people and new adventures," Park said. "I really want to travel the world in college, so I am really excited to see where college will take me. Plus, it's New York City and I really want to get to know the city."

Park will enter the engineering school with a probable major in computer science.

Checking in for a more disciplined college life than many will incur is Logan Ormsby (12), and while there are earlier alarm clocks and more regulations than any campus, the benefits outweigh the anomalies.

"I am going to the Air Force Academy," Ormsby said. "My uncle went there for his school, and I wanted to make sure that what I was doing after high school was helping other people. I thought what a better opportunity there was than to serve in the military. My dad's side of the family is big on the military, so it was cool for me to get the opportunity to continue that."

Ormsby plans to become a part of the business management program as his field of study. Succeeding his undergraduate years, he then hopes to be accepted to the pilot program. At the Academy, placement for officer positions in the military after undergraduate study depends upon academic performance and achievement.

"Once you graduate, after that it basically goes by your class rank," Ormsby said. "The higher you are, you are closer to the first picks. They give you options of where your degree is needed, and depending on your class rank you get to choose where you go. So they can send you almost anywhere."

Like Park, another scholar opting for the metropolis lifestyle is Madison Moore (12), who has committed to the University of Chicago.

"It always has been my dream school, but I never really thought I would go there because it's extremely expensive," Moore said. "But after I got my financial aid package back, and I compared it to the other colleges I was considering, it was comparable, so I decided it was worth it."

Moore will major in international studies with a minor in romance languages and literature. A gymnast, she is confident she will continue gymnastics at the school, along with photography, a rewarding hobby.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE COOPER

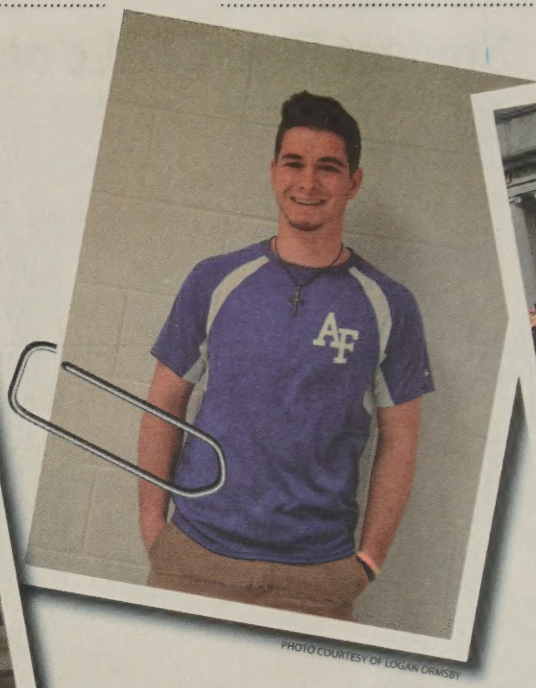


PHOTO COURTESY OF LOGAN ORMSBY

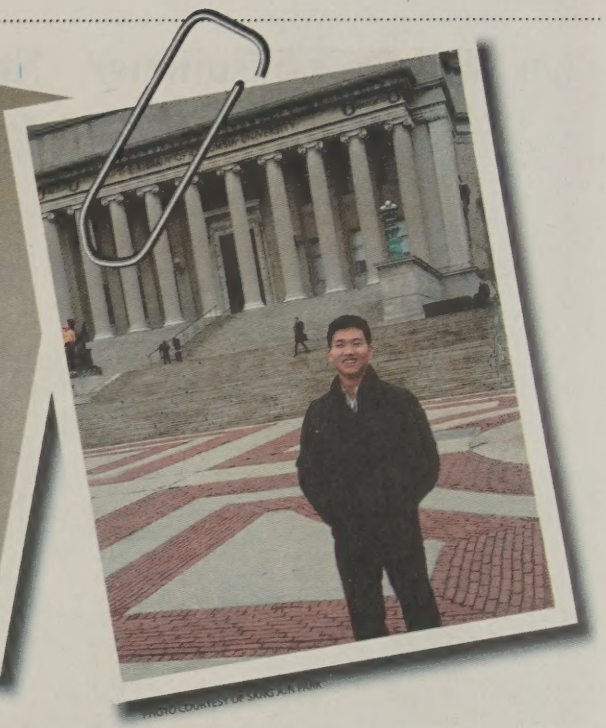


PHOTO COURTESY OF SUNGJUN PARK

"(I am most excited for) getting to live out on my own, being in Chicago, which is a really cool city," Moore said.

While the idea of college is commonly considered with reveries of life on one's own and unmonitored decisions, for many students, the workload probes the mind. The entire atmosphere of one's college experience can often prove entirely separate from any event encountered in high school.

"(The hardest thing to adjust to in college will be) the city life," Park said. "And I guess I might have to stop procrastinating and start studying more long-term. Other than that, I don't think it's going to be that bad."

Aside from academics, extracurricular activities flood in from every angle at college. Stephen Mattson (12) is one who is eager to put his name down for the groups which will spark his interest. He will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and will major in business administration and music.

"Two words: intramural dodgeball. Apart from that, and a bunch of awesome other sports stuff, UNC has a world-class symphony orchestra, so I'd love to perform with them if I make it," Mattson said. "I will likely be involved with band in some form as well. Also, sometime throughout college, I hope to gain real-world business experience, either through internships or case competitions, which are very competitive at UNC. Other than that, I guess I'll see which of their 700 plus groups I'm interested in."

Park has scoped out some personally relevant clubs at Columbia as well, and he is interested in business involvement at his school.

"I played tennis in high school, so maybe not the team but intramural," Park said. "Also, I want to be a part of the Arts Initiative. Basically, you can get free passes and discount tickets to Broadway, operas, museums and everything and I really like that. Also, after I graduate I want to go into a social enterprise or something, so I am thinking about joining an entrepreneurship group there too."

The extent of opportunity, involvement and acquisition in college and any post-secondary endeavor proves essentially limitless, and the 2015 senior class is showing its open arms. While there is something about the commons by door one and the french fry Fridays Homestead grads may miss, the world's offerings are at their fingertips, and they express their hanker-

Top Five Indiana Public Colleges Attended

31.0 % IPFW

21.2 % IU-Bloomington

17.8 % Ivy Tech Community College

12.1 % Purdue University

11.8 % Ball State University

Source: 2013 Report from www.ai.org

Homestead Grads

Five Must-Do's of summer

It is finally getting warmer, the plant life is starting to bloom and the school year is nearing its end. Of course, just because it is the end of the year does not mean it is easy; on the contrary, the last couple of weeks of school are always incredibly stressful. Although, if there is one thing that keeps all of us going, it is the dazzling and glorious idea of summer.

Summer brings so many opportunities and reduces the amount of responsibilities we have, which is why, after a whole year of stress and anxiety over grades and time management, it is essential to take full advantage of it. For those who will not be traveling, there are simple things to do that keep any summer fun and relaxing. Thus, the following, in no particular order, is a list of traditional Must-Do's of summer.

C'EST LA VIE

AWBREI VACHON
Life Editor

1. Go swimming. This may sound like an obvious one, but many people do not get around to doing it and end up missing out on one of the biggest activities of summer. Grab a group of friends and play games, practice your aquatic techniques or lounge in the sun. However, make sure to keep in mind the sun's harmful UV rays and protect your skin. Sure, mom and dad might pester constantly about putting on the sun block, but in all honesty, nobody wants skin cancer, so do not be afraid to layer it on.

2. Eat ice cream. Summer gave birth to the world of ice cream cones and popsicles, so celebrate it. It is not the same eating ice cream during winter, it only makes sense to do it when it is 80 degrees outside, and of course,there is nothing quite like cooling down with a tasty treat. Try new flavors, too, maybe a different one every day. Do not be afraid to spice things up a little.

3. Go shopping. Say goodbye to dress-code, ladies and gents. Summer is the time for shorts and tank tops, so go out and stock your wardrobe full of whatever you want. When possible, shop in new places. Take road trips to another city or state and check out what it has to offer. Sometimes there are fun shops to discover out there that you might really enjoy. If money is an issue, consider getting a summer job. It does not have to be anything big, even just babysitting or mowing lawns will earn you extra pocket money.

4. Go to a concert. Concerts are a great way to spend time with family or friends while taking in great music. Outdoor concerts are especially relaxing, and lawn tickets are usually affordable, so grab a couple blankets and set up camp on the grass. The setting sun surrounds you with a beautiful atmosphere you will not forget.

5. Just get out of the house. Whether it is simply taking your dog for a walk once a day going to the movies or doing any of the previously mentioned activities, do not forget to get outside and enjoy your restored freedom. After spending nearly ten months in school, it would be a waste not to enjoy what has been denied to us all this time.

No matter what you do this summer, just remember to relax and live every day to the fullest. Do not stress about when school will start back up again, it will only ruin your vacation. These simple teenage years will be something you will cherish as you get older, so do not take them for granted. Make the most of what you have, be safe and enjoy this incredible gift to us known as summer vacation.

Student Bere Clarke named Presidential Scholar

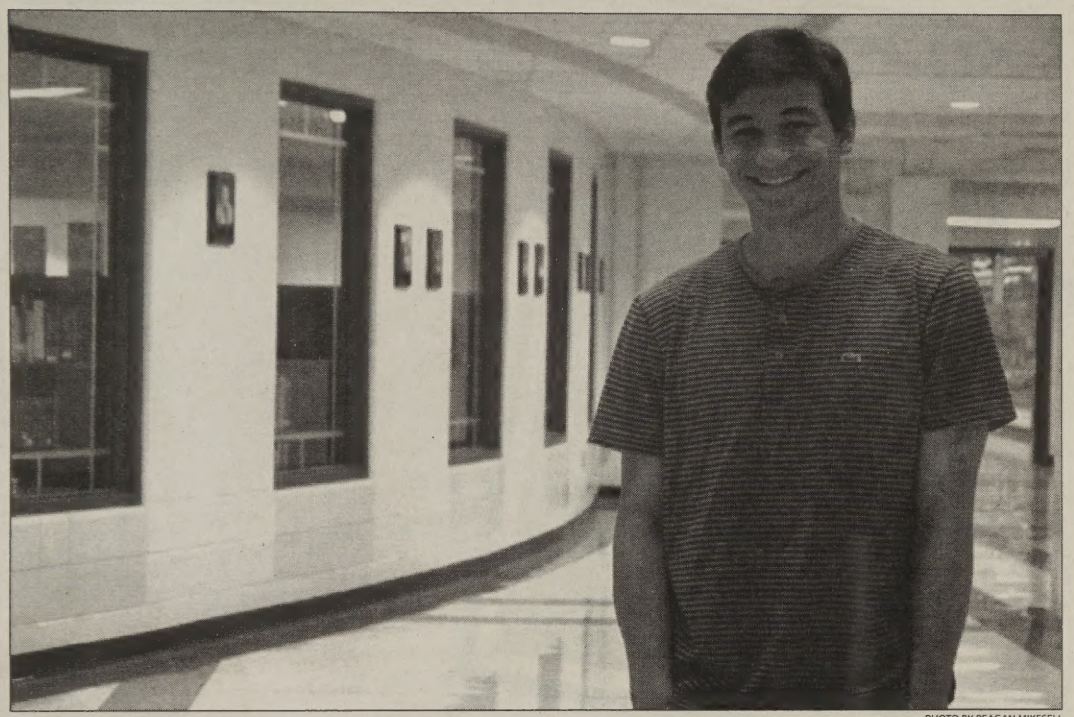


PHOTO BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Bere Clarke (12) poses for a picture after being recognized as a 2015 Presidential Scholar by the White House Commission.

Recently, the school's very own Beresford (Bere) Clarke (12) was recognized as a Presidential Scholar. Established in 1964, this prestigious program strives to acknowledge students' talent in academics and leadership as wells as in other extra or co-curricular activities, such as in the field of arts.

Each year, only a maximum of 141 senior high school students are distinguished as Presidential Scholars across the nation. Nominees for the program are selected based on outstanding SAT and ACT scores received prior to the October of the students' senior year.

Students do not apply to this program, but rather are invited based on the aforementioned areas of analysis, which is what makes the Presidential Scholar award such an honorable achievement.

After nomination, the students are notified and must then provide transcripts and submit an essay upon agreement. The pool is reduced down to nearly 560 semi-finalists who are furthermore reviewed by the White House Commission.

Shortly after this last examination, 121 Academic Scholars and 20 Arts Scholars are recognized and invited to Washington D.C. in June where they are celebrated.

The school commemorates Clarke for his high school achievements and wishes luck to both him and the rest of his peers as they prepare to embark on a new chapter following their graduation.

The Spartana staff was able to speak briefly with Clarke about the award and more.

Spartana: What has been the most significant accomplishment of your academic career?

Clarke: That's a tough one. I guess (the Presidential Scholar). But I've never had a huge award, I've just been a good student. I'm more proud of balancing school, athletic, and social life. I don't see myself being centrally academic. I'm proud of being able to separate my priorities.

Spartana: What does being named a Presidential Scholar mean to you?

Clarke: Well, it's a great honor. I didn't know what it was when I got it. I'm blessed and remaining humble because I wasn't striving for it.

Spartana: Describe your favorite moment as a student.

Clarke: Taking gym 1 as a senior.

Spartana: Who has influenced you the most?

Clarke: There's not a single one person who has influenced me, (but) it's a string of people: coaches, parents, and teachers (like) Mr. Fryzel. All teachers have had their own parts.

Spartana: If you could spend a day in any country, which country would you choose and why?

Clarke: Switzerland, because it's a beautiful country and it's really unique that they speak four different languages in different regions, and its a center for political organizations.

Spartana: What is your favorite book you've ever read?

Clarke: *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. I like dystopian novels. It's extremely raw and I've never read anything like it. It lays the base of human emotions when we're faced with life and death.

--Reagan Mikesell, Awbrei Vachon

FESTIVAL FUN

Summer events already taking place

BY KYLIE POLING
Editor-in-Chief

Summetime is known for its illustrious allure, enticing students everywhere with its siren of freedom and happiness. While swimming is certainly an option for post-academic entertainment, there are also many festivals and various events for high schoolers to attend that are supported by the camaraderie of the suburbs and excitement of the city.

Electric Spring kicked off at Headwaters Park Friday, May 8, to a crowd of over 4,100 partygoers of all ages. Electric Promotions, which organized the event, will hold another event, Electric Summer, in the coming months. Electric Summer will be just one event that students will have the opportunity to attend once school concludes for the year.

The Three Rivers Festival will occur from July 10-18, and has many unique events, such as the Bed Race and Art in the Park. TRF will also host a variety of bands and local artists throughout the weeklong event, including KC & the Sunshine Band, Loverboy (famous for "Working for the Weekend"), and local favorite Fort Wayne Funk Orchestra.

Taste of the Arts is held downtown and features dozens of food vendors and musicians from across the area. Shigs n Pit, renowned connoisseur of all things barbecue, sells pulled pork to guests, while Sweets So Geek offers all things sweet with a nerdy twist, such as Han Rolos. Sweetwater Sound displays its student talents with the Sweetwater Academy of Music stage, featuring bands such as the Soft n Heavy. Taste of the Arts will take place August 29.

Johnny Appleseed Festival will take place on Sept. 19 and 20, celebrating the life of Jon Chapman, who is buried at Johnny Appleseed Park in Fort Wayne, Ind. At the festival, held at Archer Park, attendees have the opportunity to take part in festivities such as apple bobbing and enjoy treats such as caramel apples and various fried foods. The Key Club annually volunteers to help serve food at the event.

Events such as these are fun and exciting for teens, and allow them a chance to get involved in their city and build relationships among the community.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THREE RIVERS

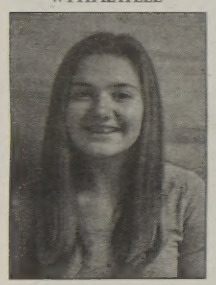
Great wins and their impact on a team, coaches and fans

Every sports team has an ultimate goal at the start of every game, and that goal is to win. It's great to have those games where you win by an insane amount of points because you're simply the superior team, but that's not what makes a great win. A great win is something you fight for, and something you earn. They elicit an amazing feeling in the end, like all of the training and long practices were worth it.

A great example of this is the state and semi-state games this year. Never before has such a great group of basketball teams existed at Homestead, and never before have they advanced as far as state. The entire school was going crazy for at least a month, completely amazed by our incredible teams. The best part of the state game was the last few minutes, where anything could happen.

That's what makes a great game different from a good one: the suspense, the anxiety, the last few seconds when you can't tear your eyes away from the field or the court.

KICKIN' IT WTTH KAYLEE



BY KAYLEE YANOVICH
Sports Editor

Those games also make the players and the coaches happier, and give them a huge confidence boost. They will come home from that game ready to tell all their family members about each play, and all the major events that happened during the game. The team will talk about it during their next practice, and they'll strive to play that well again.

They also bring team closer together. By the end, all of the players are hyped up and want the win for the team regardless. They're cheering each other on and working together to play as well as possible in order to achieve that win.

During a volleyball tournament last season, the freshman girls had a pretty close game against Warsaw and won. They were pretty happy about it until freshman head coach called them in, and told them that was the first time he has ever beaten Warsaw. The girls all stood still for a moment before going absolutely crazy, screaming and hugging their coach. The golden phrase for the day was, "Guess what? We beat Warsaw."

However, winning isn't everything. Those games are great, but they aren't going to happen every single time you play, so be prepared for losses as well. Your losses give you the ability to be humble and learn from mistakes, so take them lightly and focus on improving in your next game. Because the more you improve, the more likely you are to have those amazing wins.

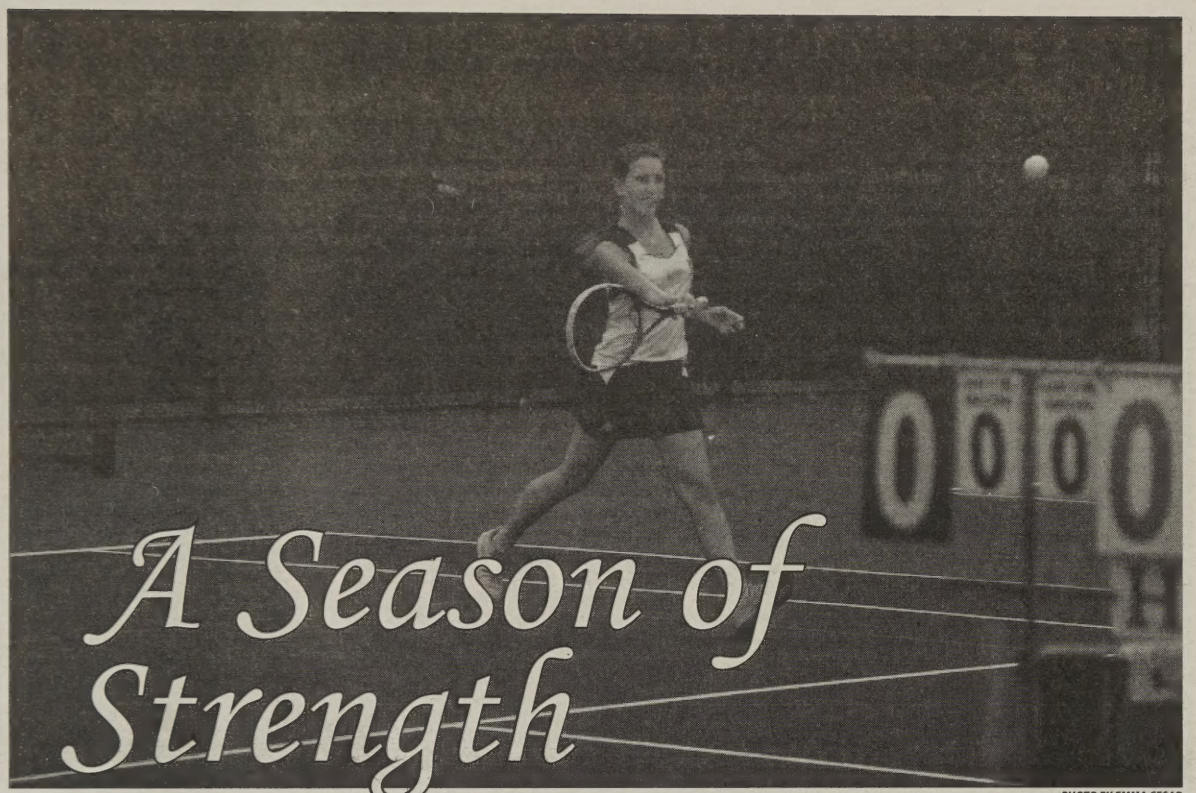


PHOTO BY EMMA CESAR

Lauren Ottinger (11) in the middle of an exciting match at the Homestead courts, striving for another incredible win

Girls' tennis continues an exciting season of wins and teamwork

BY SRINIDHI ARZA
Writer

The season for girl's tennis season has required a lot of energy, charisma and hard work. The tennis season started off with a bang this year as they won almost every match, ending their regular season with a record of 9-7.

> **"I love the experience of learning so many new things and playing people that I can learn from, and pretty much learning and having a great time while doing it."**
> **Natlalie Steingass (9)**

The team has won the first round of sectionals against Wayne High School 5-0. This advanced the team to the sectional championship. The results of this match were not available at press time.

Heavy on senior leadership, most of the team is used to a grueling season, but also had to condition and encourage the younger players.

The team is led by seniors Annie Rumsey, Allie Nelson, and Jenny Andrews. However, freshman Natalie Steingass made the starting lineup as a freshman.

"I love the experience of learning so many new things and playing people that I can learn from, and pretty much learning and having a great time while doing it." Steingass said. Being friends with all your team members and having a positive attitude is important while playing sports and the Varsity team is a great example.

"I have learned that I really have to work for what I want and that there is really no way around working hard to reach my goals." Allie Nelson (12) said.

According to Steingass, the coaches like to step away and let the team bond and have the seniors and varsity players teach other players about how to have good sportsmanship.

"The coaches do the teaching of techniques but the other two co-captains and I would lead warm-ups and stretching." Allie Nelson (12) said.

This spring has been particularly cold and the team supported each other to make it through the tough long matches. The seniors will be missed by many members.

"Well they've been our leaders throughout the season and they're some of our best players so it will be sad to see them go." Shriya Jain (10) said.

"I will really miss my teammates. Long bus rides and many practices have really brought us all together. I may not have known them without being on the team and I am so grateful for our interest in tennis in bringing us together." Allie Nelson (12) said.

They finished the season with the same charisma they had at the start of the season.

New members have been kept up well and have been striving to keep up with the team and improve throughout the season.

"I feel like we have all improved since we all played against different people in various levels." Shriya Jain (10) said. The team agrees and knows they have improved drastically throughout the season, both on the court and off.

"I'm very proud of our team; we are unified and strong this year. I really like how we work together." Dalena Trinh (9) said.

Boys and girls track and field wraps up

BY ADAM SWIATKOWSKI
Online Editor

The track and field teams are both beginning to get ready for the final stretch of the season, equipping themselves for a postseason that holds much promise. After winning a majority of their dual meets and placing second at the final Northeast Hoosier Conference (NHC) meet, the boys team holds good prospects for postseason competition, while the girls team will use their momentum from an undefeated season and a triumph at both the NHC meet and sectionals to challenge at regionals and state.

"We won the last NHC title and had undefeated seasons for both (junior varsity) and varsity," Grace Walther (11) said. "I think the team's strongest event is the 4x100 (meter relay), since they just set a new school record and were NHC champs, so they may do well (in the postseason)."

Walther, primarily a long distance runner, runs the 800 and 1600 as well as the 4x800 and 4x400 relays. Many changes made by the leaders of the girls team allowed for a better team aspect to surface, which has resulted in improvement for all participants.

"My season has been phenomenal and probably one of (my best seasons)," Walther said. "We have really focused this year on setting team goals and chasing them together as a unit. Coming up with mantras has really helped us pull through together and focus on each other's successes as well as our own."

On the boys side, runners such as Sam Dvorak (10), who runs the 1600, 800 and 400 meter runs, have also put in a lot of work to strive toward lofty goals. A relatively young group, the boys team has exceeded expectations and has performed well across the multitude of dual meets that dot the months of April and May.

"Based (on the beginning of the season), we have high expectations for the remainder of the season (and the postseason)," Dvorak said. "We first hope to defend our sectional title and advance several relays and individuals to the regional meet, and from that point just have as many teammates advance as possible."

Much of the team's success has stemmed from coaches' experience as well as the leadership of a small group of seniors who have been like mentors to the new faces of the team.

"Great coaching (has helped us) have a successful season, and because we have a young, well-rounded team, there isn't one single event we're best at," Dvorak said. "Our coaches demand the best out of everyone and (we have) great senior leaders, and I think that because our track team is so young, we have a very bright future ahead of us."

As the season has wrapped up and the postseason commences, the team still has several focus areas that they are working on in order to improve in their final few meets and be able to beat out intense competition.

"One aspect that the entire team has practiced over the course of the season is our practice and meet warm-up routines," Dvorak said. "Track is such an aerobic sport and (often) there are varying conditions (on the day of a meet), so the team warm-up is an important aspect for all events and can make the difference between qualifying or being knocked out of the competition."

Both teams now move on to regionals and potentially state, with girls participating on Fri. June 5 and the boys ending their impressive season on Sat. June 6.

PHOTO BY ARIKA AKIN

2014-2015 Year in Review

PHOTOS BY REAGAN MIKESELL

Girls basketball

School board election

PHOTO OF BEN MIKESELL

Mr. Basketball & state champs

Football

Student section

Thanksgiving lunch